

The Goblin Kingdom

ゴブリンの王国

王の生誕 I

春野隠者

illustration

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Goblin Kingdom

– Goblin no Oukoku –

- Volume 2 - The Distant Paradise (First Half)

**-Author-
Haruno Inja**

[Neo Translations]



ゴブリン・ノーマル



ゴブリン・レア



ゴブリン・ノブール



ゴブリン・デューク





ゴブリン

緑色の肌に醜い容姿の化け物。同種族の雌雄でも生殖するが、人間の女性を襲って生殖することもある。生まれてからの成長速度は早い。



ゴブリン・レア

ノーマル級のゴブリンよりも一回り大きく、赤い肌に凶悪な風貌を持つ。身体能力や知能が上昇し、言葉を話すことも可能になっている。



ゴブリン・ノーブル

レア級よりもさらに大きくなり、青い肌と赤い瞳を持つ。血の色は青く変化している。武器の扱いにも長け、知能もさらに上昇し、言葉も流暢に話す。



ゴブリン・デューク

肌の色は茶色くなり、顔には一本角が生えている。長く伸びる黒い髪に、銅のように鍛えられた肉体は美しさすら感じる。その瞳は凶暴な意志を湛えている。



ゴブリン・ドルイド

「祭祀」とも呼ばれる、魔法に長けたゴブリン。赤黒い肌で、ゴブリンには似つかわしくない瘦身長躯。相貌も人間に近い雰囲気がある。



コボルト

ゴブリンよりも下位にある種族。小型犬のような容姿で、ノーマルゴブリンよりも小さい。獣の死肉を漁って生きている。



グレイウルフ

成体は体長2メートル(メートル)を超える大きさになる。名前の通り、灰色の体毛。眷族として茶色い毛並みの狼を引き連れている。



オーク

醜悪な豚の頭に牙を生やした姿は威圧感がある。通常のオークは棍棒などの鈍器を使うが、階級が上がると槍も振る。鼻は臭いを嗅ぎ分けるらしい。



レシア・フェル・ジール

ゴブリンの集落に近付き、捕らえられた人間の女性。癒しの女神ゼノビアの信徒。

CHARACTER INTRODUCTION

(RAID ARC)

Humans

Reshia Fel Zeal (17 years-old)

The priestess known as the saint. As the Healing Goddess' follower, she lives to spread the word and teach righteousness. She has the divine protection of the goddess, and can heal others.

Lili (21 years-old)

She studied the famous sword style, Zweil Style, in the capital. She has sworn fealty to Reshia. And while she may have lost to the protagonist in one hit, she has proven herself strong enough to easily defeat three normal goblins.

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The second son of a farmer. He's largely responsible for drying the meat to preserve them.

Chinos (24 years-old)

The third son of a farmer. He plows the fields and is close to Mattis.

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An adventurer who took on a request to escort Reshia through the Forest of Darkness. He's strong enough that he could easily wield a steel great sword, but the protagonist still managed to kill him.

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A follower of Ativ. He specializes in fire magic. In his battle against the protagonist, he used his fire magic, but still lost. In the end, he tried to blow himself up along with the protagonist, but the protagonist's words agitated him, causing him to lose the opportunity.

Tinra (23 years-old)

A villager. She is one of the women used by the goblins as a breeding machine that the protagonist killed.

Ashtal Do Germion (59 years-old)

The king that rules the western region of the continent in which the Forest of Darkness and the connecting borders are included. He is a powerful ruler with seven holy knights under him. He has recently ordered three of those holy knights to search for the saint.

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The feudal lord that rules over the region next to the Forest of Darkness. As one of the country's strongest powers, he is renowned as the Iron-Armed Knight. He is currently leading his soldiers in a quest to find the saint.

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A former adventurer. As one of the country's strongest powers, he is renowned as the Storm Knight. He'd been stationed in the northern mountains, but the king called him back to send him off in a quest for the saint.

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Herculean Wyatt (40 years-old)

A member of the Blood Oath of the Flying Swallow. He specializes in handling great shields. He has a gentle personality, but beware for his anger isn't one to be taken lightly.

Mage Killer Mill (19 years-old)

A member of the Blood Oath of the Flying Swallow. She is an assassin that favors the use of talons. Renowned as the mage killer, she is a mage's worst nightmare.

Wand of Destruction Bellan (37 years-old)

A member of the Blood Oath of the Flying Swallow. He wields a fire staff. As a former knight, he cares a great deal about honor.

Hawk-Eyed Fick (31 years-old)

An adventurer with two names. He has exceptional perception and skill. He is currently searching through the Forest of Darkness under Gulland's lead.

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A priest robed in white. She specializes in healing and support. Her age, name, and origin are all unknown.

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A talkative sword-wielding adventurer. He's actual strength isn't bad, but he's still far from being deserving of a second name.

Yugil (26 years-old)

An adventurer and an unwilling shield bearer. He might appear old, but he is actually still young.

Yoshu (26 years-old)

The younger brother of the slaves Gene purchased. The collar of obedience around his neck keeps him from going against Gene's orders. Healers are rare, so he's been made into a shield bearer.

Shumea (28 years-old)

The older sister of the slaves Gene purchased. The collar of obedience around her neck keeps her from going against Gene's orders. Contrast to her brother who bears a shield, she uses a spear.

Household of the Gods

Altesia.

The Goddess of the Underworld and the Goddess of Valor. As the goddess the snakes serve, she has given her blessing to the protagonist. She is a dangerous woman with her deep jealousy and fierce temperament.

Zenobia

The Goddess of Healing. She has given her blessing to Reshia. She has also warned the protagonist to protect her. Altesia might hate her, but she doesn't feel the same way toward Altesia.

Pitch Black (Verid)

A one-eyed red-eyed snake that belongs to the Goddess of the Underworld.

Twin-Headed Snake

Known to the goblins as the Lord of Decay. He is one of the snakes that fought the world with the Goddess of the Underworld.

Others

Selena

The elven woman Gene purchased. She became a slave after running away from her tribe.

Hasu

A high kobold. She is one of the protagonist's pets.

The protagonist managed to tame her by giving her orc corps and other meat as bait. She is a fortuitous kobold who somehow managed to become the leader of her pack.

Cynthia

As the pup of the gray wolves, she has been given the elven name that means lady of the lake. Reshia, Lili, and other children and women are quite taken by her lovely fur.

Gastra

As the pup of the gray wolves, he has been given the name of a wise human monarch that means sovereign of the wind's howls. His uninhibited personality leads him to battle Hasu for ranks on a daily basis.

Bui

A timid orc. Gol Gol had taken a liking for him despite his small body. After Gol Gol died, he led the orcs to the west, but the protagonist managed to capture them.

Gol Gol

The orc king that attacked the village. He is a berserker who can use skills. He was defeated by the protagonist.

SKILL SUMMARY

TL Note: There are entries for other characters, but I've only translated the king's part so far. Please excuse me, but I really find translating this sort of chapters to be... tedious. I'll add the others in as a note if necessary, although I doubt it ever will be as the author usually explains them again anyway. Also, this is supposedly still under volume 1 in the raws, but it didn't really make sense with the previous character introduction, so I'll be adding it under the second volume.

Status	
Race	Goblin
Level	1
Class	King; Ruler
Possessed Skills	Ruler of the Demon Children of Chaos; Defiant Soul; World Devouring Howl; Swordsmanship A-; Dominator; King's Soul; Ruler's Wisdom III; Household of the Gods; One-Eyed Snake's Evil Eye; The King's Dance at the Edge of Death; Magic Manipulation; Soul of the Berserk King; Third Impact (The Third Chant); Instinct; Blessing of the Underworld Goddess
Divine Protection	Goddess of the Underworld (Altesia)
Attributes	Darkness; Death
Subordinate Beasts	High Kobold Hasu (Lv1); Gastra (Lv20); Cynthia (Lv20); Orc King Bui (Lv40)
Abnormal Status	Blessing of the One-Eyed Snake; Protection of the Twin-Headed Snake

Ruler of the Demon Children of Chaos

- Charm towards tribal goblins (HIGH)
- The abilities of goblins under your rule are increased. (MEDIUM)
- The effect of the charm on a subordinate will wear off upon their death unless the goblin is an adherent.

World Devouring Howl

- If the target is of a lower class, spells and magic can be interrupted.
- AoE Radius of 500m

Swordsmanship A-

—Sword skill just a step away from the apex.

Dominator

—Increases the maximum population that can be ruled (HIGH).

—Charm toward species other than goblins (LOW)

—Directives to those directly under you are absolute.

Ruler's Wisdom III

—When engaging the enemy's leader, damage received and dealt are increased.

—When dueling, if both parties have named themselves and are using the same weapon then strength, agility, magic power, and defense will all rise.

—When dueling, if the opposing party is defeated without killing him, then charm toward him will increase (MEDIUM).

The King's Dance at the Edge of Death

—Deal double the damage incurred to the enemy.

Soul of the Berserk King

—Increased resistance against mental attacks (HIGH)

—When dueling the damage received is reduced while the damage inflicted is increased.

—The mind will incur heavy mental damage while the skill is active, but in exchange, the damage incurred will be reduced and the damage dealt will increase.

Blessing of the Underworld Goddess

—Charm toward those who have received her divine protection (MEDIUM)

—Hate from those with the light attribute (LOW)

—Charm toward those with the darkness attribute (LOW)

Blessing of the one-eyed snake

—Stamina regeneration (MEDIUM)

—Ether is easier to control

Protection of the Twin-Headed Snake

—Stamina regeneration while fighting in the Fortress of the Abyss (HIGH)

—Stamina regeneration while fighting in the Forest of Darkness (LOW)

—The growth rate of the goblins under your leadership (LOW)

How do skills work?

For example, the Ruler of the Demon Children of Chaos gives an increased charm of (HIGH).

The (HIGH) here indicates the degree of effect of the skill because it is a passive skill, a skill that is always working.

Let's look at another skill. The skill Martial Barrier has the chance of ignoring damage incurred (MEDIUM) while also passively increasing defense (HIGH) at the cost of increasing the strain on the body (MEDIUM).

In this case, the (MEDIUM) of the first effect affects the probability of the temporary invincibility as it is an active skill, a skill that activates once in a while and is not always active. For reference: (LOW) 10-30% (MEDIUM) 40-60% (HIGH) 70-90%.

To sum it up, remarkable skills such as this one which can render an attack meaningless has a chance of failing. But, in the end, whether a skill is strong or weak on paper, their actual effect will depend on the one using them.

GOBLIN NAME CHEAT SHEET

[Goblin] Gi Ga

The goblin in that estranged group that was with the protagonist when he defeated an orc. He is currently a noble class, the highest amongst the protagonist's subordinates. He prefers to use the spear.

[Goblin] Gi Gu

The former leader of the village. He was pressured by the protagonist in his goblin noble form, and was added to his subordinates. He uses the long sword, and is relatively smart for a goblin rare. Became a goblin noble in chapter 39.

[Goblin] Gi Gi

Known as a beast warrior, a goblin with the ability to tame beasts. He evolved while hunting spear deer with the protagonist. He prefers to use the axe. His goblin class is rare.

[Goblin] Gi Go

A goblin with many wounds on his body. The food of his horde was stolen by the gray wolves, so he made a decision to follow the protagonist. He is the most experienced amongst the goblin rares. His weapon is a curved katana. He acts like a samurai.

Recently became a noble, and received the divine protection of the Sword God, Ra Baruza.

[Goblin] Gi Za

The druid goblin rare that recently joined them.

[Goblin] Gi Ji

A goblin rare. He evolved in chapter 37 after hunting with Gi Ga. He has the <> skill which makes him great for scouting.

[Goblin] Gi Do

Druid. Uses wind magic.

[Goblin] Gi Jii

Goblin Rare. From Gi Gu's Faction. He is known for his <> which allows him to see his

opponent's weakness.

[Goblin] Gi Da

Goblin Rare. From Gi Ga's faction. Notable skills are <> and <>.

[Goblin] Gi Zu.

Goblin Rare. The goblin favored by the Mad God (Zu Oru). Has the <> skill.

[Goblin] Gi Zo

Druid. Water magician.

[Goblin] Gi De

Beast tamer.

[Goblin] Aluhaliha

Leader of Paradua, one of the four goblin tribes and are known for their use of rider-beasts, which are essentially giant tigers.

[Goblin] Rashka

Leader of Gaidga, one of the four goblin tribes and are known for their valor and brutish strength.

[Goblin] Gilmi

Receiver of the title, The First Archer. He is the second in command in Ganra, one of the four tribes known for their rare ability amongst goblins to use bows.

[Goblin] Narsa

The Princess of Ganra. She is the only female goblin rare introduced so far.

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INTERMISSION

ATTACK I

Status	
Name	Gi De
Race	Goblin
Level	34
Class	Rare
Possessed Skills	Swordsmanship C-; Overpowering Howl; Omnivorous; A Monster's Feelings; Beast Tamer; Instinct
Divine Protection	None
Attributes	None

The sun shone from high above the sky.

Gi Ga was practicing hard today too. Though he has gotten much better now, as he rarely falls off, and can even properly direct the rider-beast to go where he wants.

Even though one of his legs is fake, he can somehow straddle the rider-beast and even swing his spear, albeit somewhat weaker than when on foot.

With the reins of the beast on one hand and a spear on the other, Gi Ga rode through the forests on the back of the black tiger known as Hakuou.

—Found you.

Prowling the forest in search of a prey, Gi Ga set his sights on a lone double-head. He pulled on the reins as he lightly kicked the black tiger, and as the black tiger's instincts woke, they bolted through the forest. The double-head caught wind of their charge, and it ran for its life. It knew its place as the prey. There was no winning against one's predator, so it ran without a second thought.

Passing through the trees, the double-head ran for its life despite the hard rocky road. But the black tiger was no green horn to hunting, and neither was the goblin on its

back. They were both veterans of the hunt, and they caught up in no time. Gi Ga stretched out his long arm, and attacked the double-head, slowing it down, giving chance for the black tiger to finish it off. Like that the short game of cat and mouse came to an end.

“You’ve already mastered riding Hakuou, I see.” The Paradua goblin who came here as a messenger, Alashd, nodded in satisfaction.

“Only because of your excellent teaching, Lord Alashd.” Gi Ga gratefully said as he sheathed his spear into the saddle’s sheath.

“If you’re this good now, then I think I’ll be able to return at ease.”

“When will you be departing?”

“Tomorrow eve. It won’t take five days with the black tiger’s strong legs, but it would still be best to leave soon.”

“The days will be lonely, Lord Alashd. At the very least, let us see you off with a feast.” Gi Ga pointed to the double-head he’d just hunted.

“Then I’d like some of those dried meat of yours. They’re quite delicious.”

“It’ll be my pleasure.”

Alashd fastened the double-head to his mount, and the two of them rode side-by-side back to the Gi Village.



The beast tamer, Gi De, was growing anxious as the kobolds haven’t contacted them since yesterday.

“What’s the matter?” The water mage, Gi Zo, asked upon noticing Gi De’s unusual behavior. Gi Zo excelled at water magic even among the druids of Gi Za’s village, so Gi Za and the king expected much from him.

Gi Ga Rax and Gi Zo were the two goblins in charge of the Gi Village, so when Gi Zo inquired for the source of Gi De’s unrest, he readily reported the lack of contact with

the kobolds.

“No contact, with kobold. Anxious, me.”

Even the king’s very own subordinate beast who would pester them for food hadn’t shown itself in the past two days.

“Have they found a way to procure food themselves?”

It was hard to believe that that gluttonous kobold would just up and go. Something bad must’ve happened, Gi De thought, and his grim countenance grew even grimmer.

“Me, worried. I’ll, look.”

“Very well. I shall consult with Lord Gi Ga on my end.”

“Thank you.”

Gi Zo knew that the kobolds’ eyes that the king left was a crucial line of defense against the orcs and the humans. The orcs have been behaving all this time but it was best to be safe. Gi De himself did not understand this, but he knew instinctively that the kobolds’ lack of contact was not a good thing. And so, he headed east with his triple boar.

Meanwhile, Gi Zo himself became thoughtful.

“Have the orcs rebelled?”

Rather than a human invasion, the first thing to come to mind was an orc rebellion. After all, they were enemies just not long ago. The short time spent in peace was not enough to wash away the memories of Gol Gol’s raid.

“Why the sour face? Did something happen?” The goblin that was almost like a disciple to Gi Ga, Gi Da, asked when he noted Gi Zo’s sour countenance.

“Actually...”

Gi Da scratched his head when he heard Gi Zo’s story.

“I see where you’re coming from, but I can’t imagine those orcs rebelling.”

Though they might once they’ve gotten strong enough, he added.

“Regardless, please send word for the normal goblins to gather at the village. We have plenty of food stockpiled, so it should be fine to halt our hunts and focus on keeping watch until the kobolds bring word.”

After Gi Da bowed, Gi Zo went to the king’s house. He had to explain the situation to the king’s treasures, the humans. Gi Ga was the one truly in charge of the village, but he was out. So, the responsibility would then fall to Gi Zo’s shoulders.

“I hope nothing bad happens.”

As a foreboding chill touched upon him, he looked grimly to the eastern sky.



With the triple boar at the lead, Gi De travelled to the kobold’s village with his subordinates and their wild dogs.

Half the day passed until he finally neared the kobolds’ village, and the uneasiness he felt stirred even stronger. Then the triple boar and the wild dog started growling.

“Is, someone, there?”

Gi De walked as cautiously as he could while the dogs were set loose to all four directions. Then when one of the wild dogs found something and started growling, one of Gi De’s subordinates, a normal goblin, shushed the dog as he took a peek at the dog’s discovery. He then ran up to Gi De with a look of shock on his face.

“What, happened?”

“Humans, came, lots of humans.”

Gi De passed by the shaking goblin to confirm his findings through the thickets. And when he did, he could not believe his eyes.

“...What in, the world...”

Crowds of men dressed in armor cut the trees and dug the ground, whittling the forest in their path. Gi De did not not understand why these men were here. What he did know was that these men came here to destroy their land.

But fighting now was a fool's errand. There were far too many of them. In fact, they outnumbered even the orcs.

"We, must inform, Lord Gi Ga..."

Gi De turned on his heels as he grit his teeth.

"Going so soon?"

But then a voice fell upon his ears. A cold voice unfit for the situation at hand, which brought Gi De an unprecedented sense of crisis. The owner of that voice appeared before him.

"Gotta hand it over to Gulland. That ruckus really did attract some prey."

"Just kill them already, and let's have a feast."

"All this anger I have pent up need to go somewhere after all. These guys can take the place of those blasted orcs."

Three adventurers approached him with the Wand of Destruction, Bellan, in tow.

"GURUuRURU..."

One of the adventurers became thoughtful at Gi De's growls.

"This thing is a horde chief? Sure is rare to see a beast tamer lead one," one of the adventurers said.

"Well, there are a lot of odd ones lately. From kobolds to orcs, so it's not really that weird anymore," another adventurer said.

"Who cares, just kill 'em already. If you don't hurry up, the other teams will get the points," insisted the third of the bunch.

That's true, the other adventurers nodded. Then the three of them prepared to face Gi De.

Gi De himself was only a rare goblin, but he had no intention of losing to either the water mage, Gi Zo, or the spearman, Gi Da.

Those who hunted frequently develop a sort of sixth sense. A sense that allowed Gi De to see the difference in strength between him and his foe. No, to be more precise, he couldn't help but see that difference. For his instincts as a beast screamed at him from within. He couldn't win. This was the indisputable difference between the hunted and the hunter, the predator and the pray. Which is also why Gi De himself hadn't attacked when the three adventurers were casually talking among themselves.

There was no other choice.

"...Well that's how it is. Don't take it personally?" The Wand of Destruction, Bellan who hadn't spoken a word until now, violently declared.

"Scatter!!"

When the Wand of Destruction, Bellan, stepped out, Gi De charged toward him with his triple boar.

"Nu."

"Tch!?"

When the triple boar hit Bellan, he charged out again toward another adventurer. The rest of the goblins used this opportunity to run back to the village.

"Cheeky bastards!"

"You're not going anywhere!"

The other two adventurers chased after the normal goblins, but the goblins were much faster when moving through the forest. Magic came shooting at them from behind, and one died, but the rest of them were able to safely escape.

“...So you used yourself as a decoy to let the others go.” Bellan had sent Gi De flying after he charged into him. And when he saw the goblins running away, he looked at him with a murderous gaze.

“GURUuu...”

“A respectable plan for a goblin, but it’s meaningless.”

The triple boar was already dead.

“Send word to Hawk-Eye. Something along the lines of ‘Attack the goblins’ village’”

The remaining adventurer took out a gem, and started talking, while Gi De readied himself for a fight.

“Your opponent is me.”

A red light shone from Bellan’s wand.

“From fire ^{Fire Sword} shall be born a blad”

A fire erupted from the red gem embedded at the edge of Bellan’s wand, it shaped itself into the figure of a sword. With the fire blade extending from the wand, Bellan’s weapon had essentially changed into a naginata. As he gripped his naginata tight, he fiercely yelled.

“Taste the power of the Wand of Destruction!”

As Bellan spun his naginata above his head, it struck out at a terrifying speed toward Gi De.

Gi De already knew he couldn’t win against this opponent, so he sought to buy time instead. Gi De jumped back. As he crashed into the ground, the edge of Bellan’s burning naginata met him.

“Naive!”

Fire reached out from the ground Gi Ge crashed into, and it changed into the form of a

sword. Gi De twisted his body, but one of his arms was still completely burned.

“GUGIaaaAuUAA!?”

Gi De screamed out in pain, while Bellan pursued him, and hit him again with the butt of his naginata.

Gi De somehow managed to pick himself back up, but one of his arms was no more. He had to fight one handed with his sword against Bellan.

“I’ve sent word. Should I help?”

“No. Help has no place in a knight’s battle.”

“Right.” The adventurer shrugged, but Bellan didn’t even glance at him.

Although no longer a knight, Bellan still considered fights to be a sacred ceremony. A ceremony wherein two warriors fought with everything they had to take everything from each other.

“...If you’re not coming, then I will.”

After confirming Gi De’s position, Bellan nimbly moved. With a step, he struck out his flaming naginata. Gi De tried to slip under that attack, but the blade of fire struck him from the back. As Gi De writhed in pain, Bellan prepared to give the finishing strike.

“GURUuuAa!”

“Nu.”

At that moment, Gi De wrung out the last of his strength to gamble one last time: He would throw his body to tackle Bellan, as the latter tried to land the finishing blow. The naginata on its descent, Gi De moved his feet, he bent his body, to make way for that last gamble, a literal race against time, but...

“...Looks like, I was a moment slower.”

The burning naginata was faster. Gi De’s body was split in half.

“Hmm...”

“Is something wrong?”

The adventurer watching the battle asked when he saw Bellan’s thoughtful face.

“...No. It seems this goblin wasn’t the boss of this area.”

“Goblin Rares are more than enough for a leader around these parts.”

“...Then it doesn’t make sense. Why did he let the other goblins leave?”

“Well, that’s...”

“If he is the boss, then he would’ve prioritized protecting himself. He would’ve done so even if it meant using the other goblins as shields.”

That is how the leader of a horde is. He would rather protect himself than appoint another to lead or let the rest escape to save the most. To a horde’s leader, his life is his most prized treasure.

“So you’re saying there’s someone even bigger than this guy? That’s impossible. No way there’s gonna be a noble- or duke-class out here in the boundary.”

As the adventurer said that, the other two adventurers returned.

“Fuck! They got away.”

“We’ve mostly figured out where they’re headed, so if we go now, we’ll reach them before the others.”

“Let’s go then...”

After regrouping with the other two adventurers, Bellan entered deep into the forest.

In his eyes burned the desire to fight an even stronger foe.

TL Note:

1.) Beast Warrior -> Beast Tamer. This won’t change again, since the author provided

a reading. Maybe there was one provided from the start, but it wasn't in my notes. Anyway...

INTERMISSION

ANCIENT BEAST TAMER

Status	
Name	Gi Gi
Race	Goblin
Level	95
Class	Rare
Possessed Skills	Tracking; Throw Projectile; Axe Mastery D+; Omnivorous; Jeer; A Monster's Feelings; Beast Tamer
Divine Protection	None
Attributes	None
Subordinate Beasts	Double Head Two-Headed Ostrich

There is love in discipline.

Gi Gi who always rode on his beloved steed always believed that. In fact, he believed it ever since they captured Gi Gu's village, back when the king was only a noble class. But that belief grew even more fervent when he saw how the Paradua Goblins lived.

The Paradua Goblins truly lived as one with their black tigers.

A Paradua Goblin could say 'A!', and the black tiger would finish with 'hum!'.

The Paradua Goblins were truly in sync with their beasts.

"So one must be in harmony with his beast."

His dear friend, the stealthy Gi Ji, nodded.

Gi Gi looked at his beloved steed.

Though they could not talk with words, their feelings should come across as long as they have love.

Gi Gi tried to talk to his beloved steed with his eyes.

“A,” Gi Gi tried saying, but his beloved steed only tilted its heads. Four eyes blankly looked at Gi Gi, but he wasn’t about to give up.

His love was not enough. That’s all there was to it.

“A!”, he tried shouting again, and the ^{Double Head}Two-Headed Ostrich inclined its heads even stronger. Gi Gi started to worry that the doublee head might tumble over if they kept this up.

What was he doing wrong? Gi Gi wondered.

“A-hum,” Gi Gi muttered. “I see, so that’s how to harmonize.”

Then he shook his head. What’s the point in ahum-ing alone?

Both Gi Gi and the double head tilted their heads in confusion. Then for some reason, the double head happily cried as it wrapped its two heads around Gi Gi’s neck.

“You get, along well. That’s good!” Gi Ji said, having misunderstood the situation.

“...Of course!” Gi Gi happily exclaimed as he started to feel the same.

“Let’s hunt!” He suddenly said as he rode on his double head, who happily cried in response. “Onward!”

And they set off with Gi Ji running alongside them.

The king had just conquered the Fortress of the Abyss, and was busy with the tribe chiefs. In fact, he hadn’t been seen during this rare moment of peace since he defeated the ogres and the ogre lord. It was the perfect opportunity to tour the area.



The ecosystem in the forests near the tribes’ villages was completely different from the eastern village. The old adage ‘monsters grow stronger as one heads west’ has

certainly proved itself true.

Naturally, the monsters to be hunted also grew stronger. The prey Gi Gi and Gi Ji set their eyes on was the ^{Giant Caterpillar} Green Caterpillar known for its hard skin even among the monsters of this area and its ability to spit mucus. The giant caterpillars could be as big as an adult goblin when fully grown or small enough to crawl on one's hands when still young.

Double heads love to feast on baby green caterpillars. They would frequently stick their head into the ground or into fallen trees to look for baby green caterpillars to eat. As larvae, the green caterpillars' skin were still soft. Biting into one would release this irresistibly, delicious juice that's to die for.

The older ones are much bigger. Goblins can't even eat them unless they cut them up first, but they are also delicious. In fact, when the king set off for the tribes, they hunted one along the way. It was chewy and delicious.

Gi Gi, Gi Ji, and the double head spent all day looking for green caterpillars from fallen trees.

"Found one! And another one!" Gi Gi said.

"There's one here!" Gi Ji said.

When Gi Gi would speak, Gi Ji would also speak. But then without even so much as a cry, the double head went up to Gi Gi and ate a green caterpillar from his hands.

"What are you doing!?" Gi Gi asked.

The double head feigned ignorance as one of its heads ate the caterpillar in front of Gi Gi, while the other started eating caterpillar after caterpillar out of the opening in the fallen tree.

"Mumumu..." Gi Gi growled as he looked for other green caterpillars.

"We made a, killing today!" Gi Ji happily exclaimed as he threw the green caterpillar he found over to Gi Gi, who nodded as he munched on one of the baby green caterpillars.

Meanwhile, the double head that had started feasting through the opening in one of the fallen trees suddenly found itself unable to pull its head out when it stuck its other head in too. It started to desperately flap its wings.

“...Aren’t you going to help him?” Gi Ji asked.

“He did that to himself,” Gi Gi curtly replied.

“Gue!?” the double head cried.

The two goblins who were happily feasting on the trove of green caterpillars lost themselves in the moment, and they failed to notice the approaching threat. A truly foolish mistake for a rare goblin.

“GOKYuUuRUuuu!” angrily cried something behind them.

When they turned, what greeted them were 10 giant caterpillars.

In his shock, Gi Gi lost his grip on the baby caterpillar, and then he looked at Gi Ji, who looked at him in turn. They both drew cold sweat as they stood there frozen stiff.

Meanwhile, a certain double head was still flapping its wings.

The two goblins tacitly came to an understanding.

They gradually retreated as the large number of giant caterpillars slithered toward them.

Then when they finally neared a certain double head whose head was yet stuck in some fallen tree, they turned around, and made a run for it.

“...Amen.”

“Sorry, it’s the law of the jungle. You know how it is.”

“Gue!?”

Despite looking so glum, the two goblins ran foolishly with their tail between their

legs.

They passed by the double head, as they bolted off with all their strength.

The double head panicked.

You actually left me behind! In a fit of anger, the double head found its heads free. By all means, the right course of action was to shake the giant caterpillars off. But the double head wouldn't be satisfied with just that. No. It had to at least make those two goblins suffer too. So it ran through the forest with the caterpillars in tow.



As one might expect, an army of giant caterpillars had no say against two rare class goblins and a furious ^{Double Head}Two-Headed Ostrich in a game of cat and mice, but they weren't about to take having their home destroyed lying down either. The army of caterpillars formed a line as they continued to pursue the double head through the forest.

Giant caterpillars did not excel at running, but they had long lost their minds to anger, and they wrung out every bit of strength they could as they sought to punish their unjust invaders.

Unfortunately, reality was cruel, and the caterpillars who weren't even good at running started to find themselves running out of steam.

But then the double head who was right ahead of them suddenly cried out.

The caterpillars and the double head did not share a common language.

—It's those pesky goblins!

But they understood each other all the same. And with that, the will of the caterpillars unified. The enemy is near!

—We've caught up to the goblins!

Though rotten, the double head was after all a double head, and its speed was not something the caterpillars could match. But just as they were on the verge of giving

up, the double head cried out.

“You can do it!” it seemed to say.

One of the double head’s head was talking to them as it ran.

“Gue!” it cried.

He’s such a good person, the caterpillars thought. As the double head gallantly cried out, they passed through the break of the forest. Then like a knight charging toward its enemy, the double head jumped.

“Gue!” it cried.

—Onward!

The army of caterpillars wrung out the last of their strength. They would give the highest of merits to the double head once they caught those pesky goblins, then the scenery of the open forest unfolded before them.



The double head had seen through a hole in tree that Gi Ji managed to pick up the caterpillar that Gi Gi dropped.

And he certainly had it in his hands when they left him their when they ran.

—I want to eat it!

Right! Once they get caught by the caterpillars, they won’t be able to eat that last piece anymore!

That last piece was his!

When the double head turned around, the adult caterpillars were right behind him.

—Can’t eat those. Pe!

“Gue!”

The two heads didn't realize the contradiction in his thoughts. Like that they passed through the break in the forest.

—Found them!

“Gue!”

Joy filled the double head when he noticed that the baby caterpillar was still in that goblin rare's hands.

“Oh, you came back.”

For some reason, the goblin was happily caressing his wings, but the double head ignored him and went for the caterpillar.

“They followed him.”

“Let's, do this.”

The goblin took the caterpillar, and threw it toward the forest.

—No, the worm!

“Gueee!”

The double head caught the caterpillar in midair. A spectacular technique even he had to admire!

But there were caterpillars below him!

—You're in the way!



When the army of caterpillars left the forest into the open fields, what attacked them was none other than the very same double head that led their chase.

It landed right on top of the leading caterpillar. As its great weight trampled one of the

caterpillars, it sent another flying as it started to run.

—But why!?

The caterpillars were confused. Why would the double head attack them all of the sudden? But then one of them saw the baby caterpillar in its mouth.

—Have we been betrayed!?

“KyuURURURUuu!”

Even the wails of the caterpillar was drowned out by the double head’s mad charge.

The caterpillars were spent after running through the forest. They could only watch as the crazy bird sent them flying left and right.

Then finally, the two goblins that had supposedly run away appeared.

“Good, job,.”

“You’re quite the devil too, huh?”

To the powerless caterpillars who’d been turned over to their bellies, the two goblins were no different from a pair of demons.



“...There sure are a lot of giant caterpillars today,” I pointed out as I ate supper in the Fortress of the Abyss.

“Lord Gi Gi and Lord Gi Ji managed to catch an army of them today,” Kuzan said.

Didn’t I tell them that the four tribes will take care of the hunts? Or did they still want to hunt despite that? Hmm... Anyway, greed isn’t bad for growing stronger.

“It won’t be long.”

According to the One-Eyed Snake’s Evil Eye, the both of them would soon promote a class.

“Won’t be long for what?” Kuzan asked.

“It’s nothing,” I wryly smiled. “Come, let us eat.”

The next day, I received word that Gi Gi and his subordinate beast promoted a class.



Status	
Name	Gi Gi
Race	Goblin
Level	1
Class	Noble
Possessed Skills	Tracking; Throw Projectile; Axe Mastery D+; Omnivorous; Jeer; Beast Tamer; Tacit Understanding; Ancient Beast Tamer; Beast Trainer; Cooperation; Friend of the Horde; Bug Eater
Divine Protection	None
Attributes	None
Subordinate Beasts	Double Head Two-Headed Ostrich

Author’s Note:

Gi Ji: “Boss, you’re so evil...”

Gi Gi: “Not as bad as you, Your Majesty.”

Gi Ji and Gi Gi: “Bwahahahaha!”

These sort of conversations may or may not have happened.

Anyway, until next time.

INTERMISSION

ATTACK II

Status	
Name	Gi Zo
Race	Goblin
Level	19
Class	Druid
Possessed Skills	Magic Manipulation; Water Manipulation; Inspire
Divine Protection	^{Iren} God of Water
Attributes	Water

Gi De's subordinates returned in haste and reported to the water mage, Gi Zo.

"Humans are attacking?"

Gi Zo did not know much about humans. The most he knew about them were the king's treasures, Reshia and Lili. Then there was Mattis who would prepare dried meat for them and the humans who would repair the fences.

"The humans killed Gi De!?"

The reporting goblin shivered in fright when he saw the usually calm Gi Zo turn furious. The goblin continued to shake as he reported that Gi Zo sacrificed himself to let them go. By the end of the report, Gi Zo was shaking in fury.

"It doesn't matter who it is. If they bare their fangs against us, then we shall cut them down."

He needed to inform the spearman, Gi Da, too. So he ordered the goblin to send word. As for him, he had to pay a visit to the king's treasure, Lady Reshia.

There would probably be some unrest from the humans because of who they were fighting. He hoped Reshia and Lili could help quell that unrest. This particularity of his

to be concerned about others' feelings is one of the things the king and Gi Za held in esteem. Unfortunately, they were the only ones who thought so.

To the goblins, power is everything. Things like concern or empathy, which have no effect on one's social standing in the horde couldn't be any less relevant. And it would be so until the king solidifies his position as the rightful ruler of the horde.

Gi Zo himself did not see his power as greater than his peers, though he did find himself lacking from time to time. Because of that he felt the weight of his duty as the caretaker of the village.

"Lady Reshia, Lord Lili, it's Gi Zo," Gi Zo knocked, and the ladies granted him permission to enter.

Gi Zo's respectful attitude to the king's treasure was also born from his sense of responsibility. As he entered the crude yet orderly house of the king, he began to explain the situation. He held down the fury brimming within from the death of Gi De as he calmly reported to the king's treasure. Afterwards, he asked them to help calm the humans.

"Very well. I shall do as you ask," Reshia said.

Letting out a breath of relief, Gi Zo left the house. In his eyes burnt the fire of wrath born from the loss of his brethren.

"Lord Gi Zo," the spearman, Gi Da, had his spear over his shoulder as he called out to him.

"Has lord Gi Ga returned?" Gi Zo asked, to which Gi Da shook his head. "Then there's no other choice. We will have to overcome this danger ourselves... Lord Gi Da, I leave the village to you. I shall scatter the humans."

Gi Da's eyes opened wide upon hearing those words.

"No. I, should go! Lord Gi Za, is the village chief! I go!"

His burning heart seemed to fan his feelings, and he stamped his feet and even hit the ground with the butt of his spear.

“Not quite, Lord Gi Da. It is Lord Gi Ga who is in charge of the village. I am merely a representative, but it is my duty to protect the village.”

Gi Da eventually understood after it was repeatedly explained to him. The difference in intelligence between a normal goblin and a druid was big. Fortunately, Gi Zo was able to convince Gi Da to let him go.

“I will take those I can. Though my heart isn’t steady, I leave the village to you, Lord Gi Da!”

“Leave it, to me! I, protect village!”

The males of the goblins that could fight numbered 90. But that number included the injured and the greenhorns.

The goblins could reproduce incessantly, so it came as no surprise that they have already caught up to their old numbers before the orc war.

Gi Zo took with him only a third of the goblins, but each and every one of them was the cream of the crop, every one of them a hardened veteran.

The horde of goblins headed east.



The female adventurer known as the White Hand of Life was – as the name implied – dressed in a gaudy, white robe from head to toe.

“It’s over! It’s over I tell you!” The elderly-looking adventurer clicked his hand when he saw the scene before him.

“It’s alright, it’s alright. Everything is going to be fine.” The White Hand of Life was as optimistic as ever.

“...” It was probably because of his taciturn personality that the other adventurer quietly held his shield up despite looking like he was about to curse any moment now.

A horde of goblins was before them.

After Gulland's group that consisted mostly of adventurers destroyed an orc village, they went deeper into the forest to search for the saint while having fun hunting monsters.

Thinking about it logically, the orcs were probably at the top of the food chain here. There were a lot of them, but after Gulland attacked them, they immediately ran away. If those orcs were at the top, then it should stand to reason that the level of the monsters around weren't much, so Gulland split his group into three.

"Would it have been better to go with the boss? Or maybe with the Wand of Destruction?" The elderly-looking adventurer quietly asked to no one in particular.

The White Hand of Life wasn't happy with his mumblings, and she filled the wand in her hand with magic power.

"The divine god would rather you do your job than complain," she said.

"Right, right... I probably should start currying favor with god now, eh."

While the elderly-looking adventurer kept yapping, the taciturn adventurer nodded.

^{Shield Rush}
"Unyielding Shield!"

He struck out his shield against the oncoming horde of goblins to open a path. The goblins went flying, and a small path opened up for them, allowing them to slip away from being surrounded. The taciturn adventurer was the very example of a heavy knight. But the difference in number was just too great, and the goblins kept trying to find their way around their backs.

"Sorry, but I can't let you gobs dig a hole out of that one! Wind Slash!" The elderly-looking adventurer slashed at the goblins with his long sword. It moved faster than the wind, leaving no opening for the goblins to take. This was the power of the light soldiers, the power of speed.

The small band of adventurers worked together to escape from the goblins' surround.

^{Confusion}
"The divine god is great!"

Magic power emanated from the wand of the White Hand of Life, wrapping itself around the area and oscillating.

The oscillating magic brought confusion to the goblins, causing them to slow down as they lost sight of their enemy.

“Just what you’d expect from the beloved priest of god!” The elderly-looking adventurer struck his sword against the yet sane goblins.

“Just hurry up and get out of their surround!” The White Hand of Healing said as she tried to keep herself from showing her impatience while they slipped through the confused goblins.

“Hurry.” The taciturn adventurer said.

But just as they were about to get free...

“Water bullet!”

“Ugh!?”

A groan of pain sounded from one of them.

Standing before them was a seemingly smart, red goblin, with a staff in one hand. It gave off the sort of dignity one would expect from a boss monster.

“Oh, come on... A druid?” The elderly-looking adventurer muttered, to which the taciturn adventurer nodded.

“Pull yourselves together! Remember your master!” The druid’s words woke the goblins from their stupor, and they fixed their grip on their clubs and stakes as they once again approached the three adventurers.

“Just fight as you normally do! Don’t cower!”

At the goblin druid’s words, the goblins all attacked.

“...Tch!” The taciturn adventurer clicked his tongue.

Two goblins took his flanks. At the same time, a club came swinging at him from in front, leaving him no choice but to jump back.

“Damn it!” The elderly-looking adventurer cursed.

He had struck his sword against one of the goblins, but it was able to receive his blow. Then while he was still open, another goblin aimed for his legs, breaking his balance and leaving him open to what would have been a fatal attack if he hadn’t somehow blocked it. The sparks erupting from his sword and the goblin’s club made him draw cold sweat.

The goblin that had stopped his blow a while ago, struck out its sharpened stake, passing right in front of him. He jumped back to make some distance, but behind him was the taciturn adventurer. They crashed into each other.

“Gigi!” A goblin cried.

An attack came swinging at them, and the elderly-looking adventurer hurriedly used his sword as a shield.

“Arrgh!” The elderly-looking adventurer cried out in pain.

One of the goblins had aimed for his legs. Just one would have been manageable, but then another three attacked him at the same time.

The goblins fought together well. Too well, in fact, and before he knew it, his clothes were drenched in sweat.

“Tch!”

He swept with his long sword against goblins.

“This is bad.”

The goblins were better at working together than he’d thought. Who would’ve thought there could be someone other than the elves or the demihumans of the main continent who could fight together this well?

The attack he’d received earlier to his feet was fatal. His life wasn’t in danger just yet,

but he could no longer run from the goblins.

The taciturn adventurer didn't look so swell himself either. His shield was stuck on the ground, and his hands seemed to have been done in, as he was desperately trying to stop the bleeding.

Running wasn't an option. But then defeating all the goblins was even harder. In that case, there was only one option left. They would have to defeat the chief of the horde.

Unfortunately, that was a far fetched dream as the wall of normal goblins kept them a good distance away from the druid.

“As the divine ^{Heal} god wills!”

Suddenly, the pain vanished. And the two adventurers found themselves brimming with power. When they turned to the voice that spoke that chant, they found the White Hand of Life surrounded by something they could not make out.

“The divine god has not abandoned us yet. Please do your best,” she said.

It was only through the slight opening of her robes, but the elderly-looking adventurer was sure that she smiled just then.

“Tch...I don't know about god or whatever, but it sure as hell feels like you're just taking advantage of us, sitting there at the back without risking your life! Oi, quiet guy! Can you fight!?” The elderly-looking adventurer asked.

“Of course,” the taciturn adventurer quietly replied as he took out a hatchet from his great shield.

As the adventurers and the goblins stared daggers at each other, the curtains upon the dance of death between man and goblin were drawn.

INTERMISSION

ATTACK III

The water magician, Gi Zo, shot his water bullet toward the adventurer, who blocked with his shield. Gi Zo could not shoot him down, but his relentless barrage of water bullets left the adventurer with no other choice but to keep defending. It was a barrage of power and accuracy.

Yet Gi Zo's countenance remained grim.

The reason was the healer behind the two adventurers.

“As the ^{Heal} divine god wills!”

That irritating white light wrapped itself around the two adventurers, and all of the sudden, they were back to health. The tank with exceedingly high defense. The attacker who would cut to pieces the normal goblins. But the most annoying of them all was the healer, who not only defended but also restored their strength.

That seemingly endless magic power allowed them to gradually whittle away at the goblin's numbers.

They could heal as much they wished, recovering their wounds and strength, while the goblins could only incur more and more damage. Even then, Gi Zo had no choice but to try and endure. But...

“The ^{Confusion} divine god is great!”

“Water bullet!”

If they let up even a little, the healer would cast a spell of confusion to try and break whatever advantage they had from their number. Gi Zo tried to aim for her, but the taciturn adventurer stopped him with his shield.

“Ku...” Gi Zo clicked his tongue out of frustration.

They couldn't win like this.

He needed to remain calm and think of a way to win.

5 of the 30 goblins were already down for the count. They had to think of a way to reduce the enemy's numbers. If not that, then at least a way to stop them...

Suddenly, the Goddess of ^{Hera} Wisdom smiled upon him

"Ready the stones!" Gi Zo ordered, and a group of three goblins began picking up stones.

"The target is the human at the back."

Gi Zo ordered the normal goblins to aim for the healer.

"Damn it! They've figured us out!" The elderly-looking adventurer, the attacker of the group, used his body to protect the White Hand of Life.

Gi Zo smiled devilishly when he saw that.

"...You know your target. Keep throwing those rocks!"

The rock-throwing squad sealed the White Hand of Life's movements. Gi Zo ordered the goblins not to attack the sword-wielding adventurer, so as to force the shield-bearing adventurer into defending himself.

As long as the rocks kept coming, the sword-wielding adventurer could be kept away from the shield-bearing one, and the sword-wielding one won't be able to attack the normal goblins either. But what was most crucial of all was the healer, for she was the humans' lifeline.

"As the divine ^{Heal} god wills!"

The heal came earlier this time. That was proof that the humans' shield won't last long.

"Victory is at hand! At last, we shall avenge Gi De!"

The goblins' spirit rose.



"This is bad. This is really bad." The elderly-looking adventurer grit his teeth as he fended off the flying stones. Who would've thought there was a goblin who could think this well?

Not only were they able to fight well together, they even thought up a plan to seal their movements. They were so good, they could pass for adventurers themselves.

When the elderly-looking adventurer turned to his back, he saw the White Hand of Life breathing roughly as she grit her teeth.

"As the ^{Heal} divine god wills!"

Healing for the umpteenth time, the taciturn adventurer's armor no longer resembled its former image as the goblins attacks bore into them one after another. At this rate, they would all be annihilated.

When the elderly-looking adventurer thought of having even the taciturn adventurer's body hair plucked out, he couldn't help but laugh, though he did so forcefully.

"Since it's come to this, we should..." He was about to say when a voice came from behind.

"I'll open a path," the White Hand of Life said.

When they turned around to her, they saw her breathing heavily.

She looked at them as they looked at her, and for the first time, they saw her face. She was beautiful.

"...You have a plan, yes?"

"Of course. This, eight, tch... As the ^{Heal} divine god wills!"

The goblins swarmed their tank, so she had to forcefully cast Heal to help him fight off the goblins.

“We don’t have time to talk. Just say what you need!”

“We’ll break through and retreat. Yugil first, then me, and then you, Vitz.”

The elderly-looking adventurer, Vitz, did not think she would actually remember their names. For a moment, he looked at her, wide-eyed. A high-ranking adventurer, the White Hand of life herself, actually remembered their name.

“Questions?”

“N-None.”

He could risk his life if it’s for a beautiful woman, he convinced himself.

“Yugil will watch the rear, while you take his place to fight off the goblins. After that leave the rest to me,” the White Hand of Life said.

“Ok!” He replied. “Yugil, we’re switching!”

The taciturn shield-bearing adventurer, Yugil, seemed surprised for a moment, but he quickly regained himself, and ran from the goblins. They tried to chase after him, but Vitz took Yugil’s place, keeping them from pursuing any further.

“Wind Slash!”

The winds slashed toward the goblins, but they were able to defend. At most, a goblin or two were hurt, but that was fine. He only needed to buy time.

“You should be looking over here!” Vitz said as a goblin tried to pass by his flank. Using all of his strength, he blew the goblin away.

“Water bullet!”

“False ^{Parry} abandonment.”

The flat side of his sword scooped up the water bullet, and like that he changed its

trajectory.

“Magic won’t work on me. Now, who else wants some?” Vitz smiled.

When the goblins saw him easily flick away the goblin druid’s strongest spell, they all faltered for a moment. What they didn’t know was that Vitz had gambled just now.

That earlier parry only went well by luck. It was not something he could repeat so easily, as the odds of success weren’t that high. It was a 50-50 gamble, but since he won, he was going to squeeze it for all its worth.

“Vitz, fall back!” The White Hand of Life said.

When Vitz heard that, he bolted for it.

“After him!”

The irritated voice of goblins could be heard behind, but there was no hesitation in him. He ran as fast as he could.



Gi Zo regretted his decision when he saw the adventurer running away so quickly. The technique just now was nothing more than a bluff. He shouldn’t be able to repeat it much.

So he decided to chase after him, but then light suddenly filled his vision.

“The light of ^{Light}god will show the.”

When the words of a human fell upon his ears, a light that could scorch his eyes filled the area, and for a moment, he found himself unable to move. By the time he regained his sight, the humans were no more.

“...After them! Absolutely do not let them go!”

He could immediately tell that the humans had run. There were marks on the grass and the smell of the humans lingered yet.

“Bring back the injured. If Lord Gi Ga returns, report to him the situation!”

With the injured gone, there were only 20 of them left. Gi Zo took those 20 to chase after the humans. As they continued, the smell of humans grew stronger.

It was not the smell of Gi De’s murderers, however. But that was all the more reason that he could not let them go. According to the report of Gi De’s subordinates, the number of humans is staggering.

A number too great to count.

Just three of them were already that strong. If they don’t whittle down the enemy’s numbers, the village will surely fall.

He wasn’t certain if even the king himself could deal with that many humans, so he had to put a stop to them here.

“Onward! Slay the humans!”

The goblins ran faster at Gi Zo’s words. Goblins originally ran faster than humans in the forest, for they could move as they pleased. It didn’t take long before the figure of a human appeared before them. Immediately, Gi Zo fired off his water bullet.

“Water bullet!”

The human was able to dodge by bending his body, but he still ended up being delayed.

“Surround him!”

Gi Zo ordered the goblins onward, and they encircled the humans. The humans had their backs to each other, but leaving no chance to fate, Gi Zo had the stone-throwing squad start throwing stones.

There was no need to hurry. If they slowly whittle down the enemy, they can finish them off once they run out of gas.

As he stifled the anger seething within, Gi Zo calmly commanded the goblins.



He fended off the falling stones despite being irritated.

“You sure it’s here!?” Vitz asked.

“Yes, I’m positive,” the White Hand of Life replied.

The three of them fended off the falling stones. They had led the goblins here according to the plan of the White Hand of Life, but Vitz failed to see how this was any better. If anything, it would be more apt to say that they were in a worse situation now than before, since this time they were actually surrounded.

“Don’t worry,” the White Hand of Life said.

He couldn’t get mad at her. The one who decided to gamble was him. He was not forced to this, so he didn’t have the right to get mad just because the plan didn’t work.

Gradually, more and more rocks came flying at them. Some were straight balls and some were curved, the goblins were a truly, tricky bunch.

In the midst of that seemingly endless rain of stones, one grazed past his legs, taking his attention away. It was for a moment, only a moment, but it was in that moment that a stone came falling right over his head.

“Tch!?”

His mind a bit hazy, he tried to stand up, but stone after stone were already headed his way. There was even a water bullet mixed in with that barrage.

Yugil’s shield had long turned into a mere lump of iron, while his armor was a mess of holes. Even the White Robe of Life had her pure, white robe stained with red here and there.

Is this the end?—

But just as he was about to give up, the screams of goblins resounded in the forest.

“—He made it.”

With a shield bigger than even Yugil's, it was none other than the Herculean, Wyatt of the Blood Oath of the ^{Swallow Clan} Flying Swall, who protected them.

"It would have been pretty bad if not for the sign, actually," the Hawk-Eyed Fick joked.

"Leave the rest to us," the mage slayer, Mill, who suddenly appeared behind them said.

As the goblins screamed in pain, the swing of a great sword cut through the air. Clad around the great sword were – as his two names implied – a storm of wind.

"Ha ha ha ha ha ha! Die! Die, filthy monsters!!"

The storm knight, Gulland, a raging soul of violence and might. With the swing of his great sword the goblins came flying to the trees, and goblin after goblin were slayed together with their clubs and stakes.

The great sword known as Blue Lightning made short work of the goblins. He was truly the embodiment of the word, hero.



How do you describe a scene like that?

Gi Zo could not think of it, but one such word would be... despair.

As far as Gi Zo was concerned, the only thing he could think of was that a human was attacking them.

Just a while ago, they were pursuing a group of strong humans. When they caught up, they managed to push them into a corner, and were even about to finish them off. But then all of the sudden, everything changed. A great sword clad in storm called upon the winds, and suddenly, they found themselves on the losing end.

"B-Bastard..."

They were going to lose.

The indisputable truth before him overwhelmed him.

“No! This can’t go on!”

Be that as it may, however, they couldn’t just stand by doing nothing either. They might not be able to win, but they had to fight. At the very least, he needed to buy time.

“Retreat! All of you retreat! Someone needs to make it back to the village!”

As he ordered his subordinates, he shot a water bullet to the humans that just entered the fray. But that water bullet was easily cut by a female adventurer.

The water bullet that was flying in the air was cut cleanly by the sharp nails of her talons.

“Poorly matched.”

A few words left her lips before she ran for Gi Zo. In the blink of an eye, she was right in front of him. Gi Zo shot more water bullets at her, but they all merely dissipated.

The mage slayer. In her talons lay absolute power against ether, and when she brandished them against Gi Zo, he immediately turned to take some distance.

“Wha...!?”

But the storm right behind her had already cut Gi Zo. By the time he’d taken some distance, he was already a thousand, tiny little pieces.

“Gulland, you dare!?”

Without the slightest concern for Mill, Gulland continued to hack away at his next prey.

“Don’t dawdle, young lady,” he said. “Unless you want to be killed by me.”

His lips twisted a cruel smile as he slaughtered the goblins one after another.



Status	
Name	Gulland Rifenin
Race	Human
Level	88
Job	Holy Knight; Storm Knight; Traveler; Seeker of Monster Dens; Frenzied Sword; Soul of A Crazy Warrior;
Possessed Skills	Strong Arm; Swordsmanship A-; Charisma; Raging Greed; Hundred-Demon Slayer; Fire God's Blessing; Rebellious Spirit
Divine Protection	Fire God
Attributes	Fire
Equipment	Blue Lightning (Great Sword)

Strong Arm

—Prevents backlash when using a skill.

Charisma

—Other people will respect you. Increases influence.

Seeker of Monster Dens (Previously translated as Dare Devil)

—When fighting in dungeons, strength and mana are raised. (LOW)

Frenzied Sword

—Slash consecutively against a distant target with a storm of swords.

Soul of a Crazy Warrior

—Strength will multiply several times in exchange for one's sanity.

Raging Greed

—The chance of stealing item from a defeated enemy is increased. If the target doesn't have any items, damage will increase.

Hundred-Demon Slayer

—Regeneration increased after defeating a monster. (LOW)

—Mana is increased. (MEDIUM)

Fire God's Blessing

—Damage from fire is reduced. (HIGH)

Rebellious Spirit (Previously translated as Rebellious. Might just be a mistake in my notes.)

—When fighting against a higher classed opponent, mental attacks are negated.

Author's Note:

Goblin Fatalities: Gi De, Gi Zo, and normal goblins.

Human Fatalities: none

Goblin Casualties: 20 normal goblins

Human Casualties: none (The White Hand of Life healed them.)

INTERMISSION

GI GA'S DECISION

Status	
Name	Gi Ga Rax
Race	Goblin
Level	89
Class	Noble; Guardian
Possessed Skills	Spearmanship C+; Overpowering Howl; Omnivorous; Instant Kill; Adherent of the King; Spear Throwing; Warrior's Soul; Indomitable Soul; Insightt
Divine Protection	None
Attributes	None

The village was a flickering flame by the time Gi Ga Rax returned.

“Did something happen?”

There were fewer goblins than usual, and the water mage, Gi Zo, who would always greet him was nowhere to be seen.

“Lord Gi Ga!”

It was the spear-wielding goblin, Gi Da, who greeted Gi Ga upon his return. The puzzled Gi Ga asked what all the commotion was about, and when he found out what happened, he got off his mount to think.

“Lord Alashd, forgive me, but it seems we’ll have to put off our farewell party for later.”

“So it seems.”

Alashd only nodded as he took his spear when Gi Ga said that. He seemed completely unperturbed.

“We have a custom in our tribe where we knock our spears to promise that we will one day meet again. Brave warrior, Gi Ga Rax, I believe you are qualified to make such an oath. Would you do me the honor?”

Gi Ga was taken aback. He knew very well how proud the goblins of Paradua were, so he understood the significance of Alashd’s words.

“...The honor is mine,” Gi Ga said as he brought up his spear, and lightly knocked against Alashd’s.

“May we both live to meet another day, Lord Gi Ga. Onwards!”

Alashd took off on his mount, riding faster than the wind for Paradua village.

He could’ve defended the village with Gi Ga, but there was a restlessness within that he could not ease. It was not as if he had ever met a human, but from the report he’d heard, the humans were both powerful and cruel. If so, then reinforcements would be necessary. Though somewhere in his heart, he hoped that it wouldn’t.

“Please make it in time!”

To Aluhaliha, and to the king... They must be informed of this threat. And so, the goblin of Paradua, though pained, rode like the wind on black-tiger-back to reach the village if only a moment sooner.



Gi Zo was dead.

The moment that report reached his ears, Gi Ga decided to abandon the village. And he gathered the humans to the village square to inform them of that decision.

“We will go through the lake to take refuge at the fortress where the king resides.”

Everyone was surprised at his decision. Reshia, the humans, and even Gi Da and the rest of the goblins.

“We don’t know how strong the enemy is, but more than anything else, we can’t risk putting the king’s treasure in danger.”

“Then what’s going to happen to this village!?”

The one who raised his voice was a male human. It was one of the newer men, but Gi Ga couldn’t recall his name.

“We abandon it,” Gi Ga firmly replied.

“No!” The man screamed.

“Is the enemy that strong?” It was Lili who asked that.

Reshia seemed to be brooding over something, as her head was hung down.

“Gi De and Gi Zo are both dead,” Gi Ga replied. “The other 20 normals have also been done in.”

The staggering number of casualties greatly shocked the humans who weren’t used to fighting. Moreover, that 20 was the cream of the crop amongst the goblins of this village. The strength of the enemy was not something that could be matched even with Gi Ga.

“If you can’t agree with this decision, then it’s fine. It doesn’t matter. But the king’s treasure, Lady Reshia, you must come with us.”

The male humans looked at each other. How were they to protect their young and women?

“But...” One of the men tried to say, but Gi Ga shot him down.

“The decision is final,” he curtly replied. “Lady Reshia, please begin your preparations.”

Reshia was brought to the king’s house at Gi Ga’s urging, and then Lili not long after. The men who were still at the square all looked at each other, wondering what they would do.

In the end, the humans split. Some would go with Reshia, while some would stay behind in the village. But regardless of their decision, the goblins all left the village.



Gulland, Gi Zo's killer, spent the night in that same area to reach out to the others and meet up. The White Hand of Life was already with them, so the only one missing was the Wand of Destruction, Bellan. It wasn't until a day later that they rendezvoused with him, and then the adventurers all talked about what happened in their quests, as well as what they plan to do next. Not one man was missing, so all the adventurer groups reported their success.

"At most, we stumbled onto an orc or two, but that's about it, there's no big catch or anything," Gulland said, to which Wyatt nodded.

"That leaves the goblin faction then," he said.

"I find the goblins to be a greater threat than the orcs," the adventurer, Vitz, interjected as he looked toward the White Hand of Life.

"Right, there were a lot of them," said Wyatt before becoming thoughtful. "But it sure is rare for them to fight more than the orcs. Were they isolated? Or is it because they have a powerful leader?"

"I also believe the goblins are a greater threat," the Wand of Destruction, Bellan, who rarely spoke said. Normally, he would leave the talking to Wyatt. Was there something he had in mind?

"A rare sight," Wyatt said.

When he noticed people staring at him, Bellan explained. "There was a rare-class among the goblins, but he wasn't their leader. He was a small fry. There's probably a big one behind the goblins."

"Are you implying there's a noble class?" Wyatt asked.

Bellan shaking his head made the adventurers look at each other.

"A duke then? But in a place like this?" Wyatt said, pondering.

Then with a ferocious grin on his face, Gulland loudly spoke.

“It’s decided! We’re going after the goblins!”

“Wait, what about the saint!” Asked the mage killer, Mill Dora, earning her the sharp glare of the hero adventurer, Gulland.

“If the saint is yet alive,” the White Hand of Life interjected. “Then she’s probably with the strongest monsters of the area. If so, then she’s probably at the village of the goblins.”

Gulland sneered as he watched Mill reluctantly step down. After he announced their departure first thing in the morning, the adventurers all dispersed.

“Mill, can I speak to you for a moment?”

It was Wyatt who said that.

“What?” Mill impatiently replied.

Wyatt smiled an elderly and gentle smile in return. “Is there something troubling you? You seem to have a hard time with Gulland.”

She was a woman known to quietly do her job. It was rare to see her that talkative.

“I took this job because he said he would rescue the saint. But that guy is...”

Wyatt couldn’t help but laugh when he saw her act like a sulking kid.

“It’s not like Gulland said he has no intentions of saving the saint.”

“Then he should work harder!”

“Mill...”

With a gentle pat on her head, the old man acted more like a father admonishing his child than a coworker. “It’s not that I don’t see where you’re coming from. I mean the saint is – to some extent, no matter how small – somewhat related to you, right?”

Pitying the girl lightly nodding her head, Wyatt added. “Don’t worry, I’m sure she’s alive. After we defeat the goblins and save her, you should stand by her side and

protect her.”

After seeing her nod her head again, Wyatt let go of her head with a wry smile.

“Sleep well, ok?”

“You too, Wyatt.”

“Cheeky kid.”

Status	
Name	Mill Dora
Race	Half Elf
Level	49
Job	Skilled Assassin
Possessed Skills	Mixed Soul; Fire God's Blessing; One who shuns magic; An Elf's Tail; Rebellious Spirit; Silent Moon; Jack of all trades;
Divine Protection	Fire God
Attributes	Fire
Status	Agility is increased due to being one-fourth elf

Mixed Soul

—Elf and humans will shun you. (LOW)

—Physical abilities increased. (LOW)

Fire God’s Blessing

—You have the blessing of the god of fire. Resistance to fire increased. (MEDIUM)

Regeneration increased. (MEDIUM)

An Elf’s Tail

—You can control freely control your presence in the forest.

One who shuns magic

—Magic casted by enemies with a lower class than yours will have no effect. (MEDIUM)

Silent Moon

—Hides your presence.

—Preemptive strike for the first blow. If the attack fails, damage received will be doubled.

Jack of all trades

—Mastery to all weapons is raised to C-.

Author's Note:

A quarter is a quarter, but when it comes to the blood of other races mixing, like in the case of an elf's and a human's, a quarter is considered half. So Mill would be called a half elf. But that's only in name, and in the end, unless atavism occurs or something, the ability she can muster would be only at the level of a quarter-blood.

In the case of goblins mating with humans, the resulting offspring is almost always a goblin. So, the male seed is dominant. Which is why they can kidnap the female of other races, and do this and that.

In Mill Dora's case, her grandpa is human (deceased) and her grandma is an elf (whereabouts unknown). Her parents are both humans (both deceased), so her case is already that of atavism, as she's able to use the abilities that came from her grandmother. It's because of those abilities that she was able to become an adventurer with a second name.

To sum it up: Goblin x Human = Goblin. Human x Elf = Human or Elf.

INTERMISSION

THOSE WHO CHASE AND THOSE WHO ARE CHASED

Status	
Name	Gi Da
Race	Goblin
Level	36
Class	Rare
Possessed Skills	Spearmanship C-; Knowledge of the Spear; Spear Throwing; Overpowering Howl; Unreasonably Stubborn
Divine Protection	None
Attributes	None

The fleeing goblins could not run as fast as they could because of the humans and the pregnant goblins, but they still orderly left the village with Gi Ga Rax at the lead and Gi Da right behind.

A full day had passed since Gi Ga and his men left the village. At this time, Alashd had already arrived where the king was. And though dirty and unwashed, the first thing he sought was an audience with the king.

He told the king of the human threat approaching the village. A look of shock appeared on the king's eyes, but that was all, and it was only for a moment.

"Gather the men!" The king said. "We set off at once! Kuzan will defend the fortress!"

With Kuzan watching over the fortress, the king left the fortress with the rest of the goblin army. At the lead was Gi Gi, followed by the young chieftain of Paradua, Hal, and the king himself leading the rest of the tribes. Like this the goblin army headed east.



Meanwhile, the adventurer group led by Gulland was forced to stop a day's distance from where Gi Zo was killed.

“Gowen, that bastard!”

Gulland heaved and fumed as he looked for Gowen Ranid, who was yet to arrive.

“It can’t be helped. We’ll have to wait. Even we can’t move without supply,” Wyatt said as he tried to calm the fuming Gulland.

“It’s because the only thing he has going for him is that big body of his,” Mill said in a rare moment of agreement with Gulland, clearly annoyed at not being able to leave despite already breaking camp.

“We mustn’t be hasty. This too is the will of god,” the White Hand of Life generously said, to which Vitz and Yugil who were already used to her antics looked at each other, and wryly smiled.

Now as for why the adventurers found themselves at a standstill here, the answer was quite simple. It’s because they have no supplies.

The three holy knights originally agreed to go their own ways, but the land seeking Gowen and the hunt seeking Gulland saw an opportunity to be had.

In order to achieve their own goals, the both of them decided to neglect the mission of saving the saint. Gowen wanted land and Gulland wanted to hunt. One was a feudal lord who wished to expand his territory and the other was a famous adventurer. It wasn’t hard to see that they could benefit from each other if they just put away their emotions and worked together.

The feudal lord would provide the supplies: food, water, medicine, and other goods, while the adventurer would cut down the monsters, and clear the land.

“Well, you are a cowardly bastard who can’t even protect himself,” Gulland said.

“Just think of it as me hiring a pack of watch dogs,” Gowen calmly replied.

It was in this way that the two of them came to an agreement, and as a result, the adventurers couldn’t stray too far from the feudal lord and his men lest they wished to find themselves without supplies.

The adventurers wanted to go hunt the rest of the goblins, but couldn't because the feudal lord's group was too slow. But that was to be expected, after all they were building a road as they followed from behind.

There might not be any monsters left for them to fight, but they still had to pull out the trees and dig out the ground, so of course they were going slow.

Adventurers could normally go into a dungeon with a week's worth of supply, but the location of the goblin village was uncertain. There was no telling how far they would have to walk before they would find it, because of that they couldn't stray too far without the feudal lord's supply.

To adventurers knowing the exact location of the dungeon and having plenty of resources are the two most important conditions when hunting. It wouldn't do to attack a dungeon, and then die of hunger afterwards. The adventurers knew this well. All the more so when said adventurers are first rate, so even Gulland himself couldn't push forward.

"Damn it!" He cursed.

Yet despite that he still ordered for camp to be made. They would have no choice but to wait.

Two days later they got their supplies.

As soon as they received their supplies, Gulland and his men took off like a pack of wolves on the hunt for a flock of sheep.

When Gowen saw that, he said with an expressionless face. "Take the Yuan Scouting Party, and follow the adventurers."

"As you command!"

His cold gaze ever followed the backs of the adventurers.



The horde of runaways continued to flee to the north.

Gi Ga fought the monsters that blocked their path mostly by himself, as Gi Da and the other warrior goblins were at the back. Gi Ga personally arranged for this to ensure the safety of the rear in the case the humans managed to catch up.

It was not easy traveling through the forest without road. It took them two days just to get through and reach the lake, then from there, they headed west. Their goal was the rocky mountain that Gi Go once lived in. There were few monsters around it, being the former home of the gray wolves, so Gi Ga thought it would be a good place to rest.

The beast tamers carried the injured goblins on their beasts, while a member of Gi Go's old tribe guided them.

"Kisha!"

While they were resting by the bank of the lake, a familiar cry reached his ears along with the sound of humans screaming.

Lizard men. Gi Ga approached them with a spear on his only hand, while Gi Da watched his back.

The lizard men were an enemy he'd once met on this same shore, so he stopped momentarily before them. "He did not miss the opening they showed when one of them brandished its curved sword, and in the next moment, a spear was lodged right into the chest of a lizard man.

"Magnificent."

Gi Ga used his long reach to defeat the lizard men from afar, while Gi Da took care of the approaching ones with his short spear.

In less than five minutes, they managed to take down five lizard men. Gi Ga was filled with emotion as he looked down their corpses. Seeing that, Gi Da called out to him.

"Is something the matter?" He asked.

"I once fought with the king here," Gi Ga replied.

Back then the king ordered him to fight, and he fought until he could no longer move. The king had to step in to save him. He was so young and inexperienced then.

He couldn't help but laugh bitterly when he thought that, though at the same time it strengthened his resolve. The king – his king – is waiting for them in that direction.

"I can't die now."

His feelings renewed, Gi Ga prepared to leave again.



"It's a village," Fick said as his skill, True Sight of the Hawk, revealed the path on the other side of the trees.

"How many?" Mill asked, being one of the two along with Fick who were tasked to go scout. They were chosen because of their quickness, as that meant they would definitely be able to bring back info to the group.

"There's not a lot. At most, there's... 5."

"Alright. Let's go back for now."

Fick and Mill went back to report to Gulland and his men.

When they came back Gulland and Bellan were butting heads.

"Did something happen?" Fick asked, while Mill was somewhat impressed, as that was not something she could see herself doing.

"It doesn't sit right with me, being watched like that from the back," Bellan bitterly said.

When Mill asked Wyatt for an explanation, he wryly smiled as he looked toward the direction they came from. "Apparently, Lord Ranid doesn't trust us much. Can't say I fault him though."

Mill followed the direction he was looking, and there she saw a party of scouts peeping at them.

"It doesn't sit well with me either," she said.

“Indeed,” Fick agreed.

But they couldn’t push them away either. They were free to do as they wished after all, so the adventurers shifted their attention to Mill’s and Fick’s report.

“No way there’s only five of them. Not a chance in hell that’s happening with a goblin horde of that scale,” Vitz mumbled, to which Yugil nodded.

“Are you saying you can’t trust my “True Sight of the Hawk?” Fick unhappily asked.

“What they mean is that it’s probably a trap,” the White Hand of Life added.

The group of adventurers became thoughtful at those words.

“Doesn’t matter,” Gulland said. “We’ll just beat them all up even if it is a trap.”

It didn’t matter how strong the goblins were if there were only five of them.

“Any complaints? No? Then let’s go!”

With the great sword of blue thunder on his back, Gulland bolted off for the village with the adventurers in tow.



Status	
Name	Fick Barbad
Race	Human
Level	78
Job	Skilled Adventurer
Possessed Skills	True Sight of the Hawk; Meld; Shadow Walker; Dog Nosed; Swordsmanship C+; Archery C+
Divine Protection	None
Attributes	None

True Sight of the Hawk

- Ignore obstacles in the way to see the enemy.
- Has no effect on enemies over two classes above one's own.

Meld

- Hides one's presence to stealthily approach the enemy.

Shadow Walker

- Vision isn't hindered by dark places.

Dog Nosed

- Can follow the trail of scent with the accuracy of a dog's nose.

Author's Note:

Gi Ga finds himself reminded of a certain king who hasn't been showing up lately.

It takes about 10 days to get to the Fortress of the Abyss, but that's while walking and hunting for food... And only when going there for the first time, it's a lot faster when you know the way.

Now I wonder if that reinforcement is going to make it.

INTERMISSION

THE WITCHING HOUR

Status	
Name	Gi Da
Race	Goblin
Level	36
Class	Rare
Possessed Skills	Spearmanship C-; Knowledge of the Spear; Spear Throwing; Overpowering Howl; Unreasonably Stubborn
Divine Protection	None
Attributes	None

As the adventurers kicked down the door of every house, they warily asked the humans they found of the goblins' whereabouts.

"Where are they?" Bellan asked in that interrogative manner he'd picked up when he was still a knight, while Mill asked the women left in the village about the saint. As a result, they were able to confirm that the saint was in fact still alive, and so they hurried their pace even as they kept a watchful eye out.

Lopping off the protruding branch and kicking off the ground, they chased after the goblins with hastened gait.

Mill led from the front. After confirming the saint's survival, her desire to save her reached the peak, and she could not help but take the most dangerous position of them all. As someone who was originally famed for her speed, her haste made the group of adventurers go even faster.

Still, there was a limit to the distance one could cross in a day. Half the day later, they reached a lake and happened upon a group of lizard men. The ghastly Mill and the war-loving Gulland made short work of them, then they hurried themselves even more. But in the end, they had to stop to make camp when the day came to a close.

“Just a little bit more. If we go just a little further,” Mill pestered, but Gulland firmly shook his head.

“...Wyatt,” Mill turned to Wyatt.

But he only agreed with Gulland. “Sorry, but he’s right this time.”

Mill drooped her shoulders at that.

“Actually,” Fick said when he saw the downhearted maiden. “If you don’t mind accompanying me alone, I still have to patrol the area.”

Wyatt wryly smiled when he saw Fick wink after saying that, while Gulland just said that they could do whatever they want. Shortly after, Mill left with Fick.

Then after an hour of searching around the camp, Fick came to a halt.

“Well paint me green and call me a goblin,” Fick said with an expression that wanted to laugh but couldn’t.

“What? Is something there?” Mill asked.

“You bet, a huge horde of almost a hundred of them gobs,” Fick said as he quietly traced back his steps, planning to retreat, but when he saw Mill, he stopped.

“Hey!” Fick quietly called. “What are you doing?”

“Thank you, Fill,” Mill said. “Lady Reshia is there. I have to save her.”

Fick managed to catch her by the shoulder before she left. Quieting his voice as much as he could, he rebuked her. “Are you stupid? Look at the situation!”

The sun had already set. With darkness everywhere, it was no longer a time of man but of monsters. Fighting in this darkness, in which the monsters could fight at their best, was nothing short of suicide.

“Let go!” Mill said as she struggled with Fick, but then they both heard something sound from the thickets. Like a pair of deer caught in the headlights, the both of them stood frozen still for a moment before deciding to retreat.

“...We’re going, ok?”

“Damn it... Just wait, Lady Resiha! I’ll definitely save you!”

The two adventurers quickly retreated from the goblin horde.



Meanwhile, Gowen Ranid stopped at the village the adventurers left. Before him was a plate of simple food no different from what his men ate, a pile of paperwork that needed to be done, and the residents of this village.

“So why are you people here?” He asked as he signed the papers, then he looked at the men with that ever cold gaze of his.

“We were...” The man hesitated for a moment.

The man who answered for the group was the man in charge of the building of the fences around the king’s house and the rest of the village. His hesitation at answering did not escape the feudal lord’s cold eyes. Those eyes that seemed to be looking at something rather than someone.

“We were kidnapped by the goblins,” the man’s wife answered for him.

Her husband glanced at her with shock, but she was clearly emphasizing that they were in fact kidnapped.

“I see... It must have been difficult,” the feudal lord said.

The couple heaved a sigh of relief.

“If that is all, then I welcome you to my fief. Rest assured you will be protected along the way,” the feudal lord said.

“Thank you very much,” the husband said.

“You are dismissed.”

Like that the Feudal Lord, Ranid, hastily settled the issue of the five residents.

“Was that alright?” His adjutant asked. “Their women might be of child, of goblin child that is...”

“It’s fine.” Only Gowen’s eyes moved to answer him. “Once they return to my territory, they will have to pay all unpaid taxes. Goblins are of little relevance.”

The adjutant swallowed his breath upon hearing that. Gowen apparently figured that they must’ve ran from another fief, and was apparently intending on making them pay the taxes they failed to pay once they return.

Commoners fleeing a fief wasn’t rare. On the contrary, it was quite common. And that was so for just a year’s worth of tax. These people must’ve been missing for some time now. It wouldn’t be odd if these people missed at least two years of tax. That was not something they could possibly account for. At least, not unless they sold a relative or two to slavery anyway...

Yet the feudal lord remained as cold as ever, not a hint of emotion or sympathy on him despite knowing that, reminding the adjutant again of why this man was so fearsome.

“It should be about time for our pack of dogs to catch something.”

“Yes...”

Gowen analyzed the information he received from his scouts with the time the goblins left to make a prediction.

His adjutant would find something like this divine or godlike, but to him it was just a matter of fact.

“Gather the squads. We shall trample the goblins with those pack of dogs,” he said.

“But it’s already late, if we go now...” the adjutant argued.

The night was the monsters’ friend, so Gowen could understand his adjutant’s apprehension.

“Of course, I will be leading. You need only watch the surroundings of the village, and

ensure that the fire keep burning.”

“As you will.”

His gaze ever cold, reason and logic wove within his mind as he sought only to attain the best results.



The ancient beast tamer, Gi Gi, and Hal rode at the king’s behest, taking with them 20 of Paradua’s iron-legged riders. As a horde consisting purely of riders and beast-tamers, they rode at a speed unknown to those who could only walk. And after only a night of riding, they had already crossed half the journey.

“GURUuu”

The goblins wore a grim face. They had been riding all this time with nary a rest in between. Even the black tigers they rode upon were dyed in the color of fatigue.

But even then, they rode, following the ancient beast tamer, Gi Gi, who rode upon his ^{Triple Head} Large-Horned Ostrich.

When they passed through some thickets, Hal spoke. “Let’s rest here for a bit.”

“...Understood,” Gi Gi said.

He grit his teeth in frustration as he looked toward the direction of the village. If they kept going like this, they would reach somewhere near the village a day later. If so, then it might be possible to rendezvous with the goblins.

As he fed the triple head some dried fruits, he leaned his back to the ostrich’s large body and closed his eyes. By doing so, he would only hear the breath of the rider beasts.

—*Rustle

But then the sound of thickets rustling reached his ears, and Gi Gi opened his eyes. From out of the darkness of his vision, he noted a circle of faintly, dazzling green.

Opening his eyes just big enough to see a rider beast, he searched around the circle of green light, where he found the breath of man clearly resound.

“...Humans.” Gi Gi whispered.

“There’s an elf too,” Hal added.

The goblins did not know this, but that group of elf and humans was actually none other than Gene’s group, who were using the elven path.

“...What a pain. Let’s go around them,” Hal said, to which Gi Gi asked with his eyes whether it was alright not to finish them off here now. And Hal responded, “What we have to do now is not to protect some elf or hunt some human, but to protect those goblins from the village.”

So they woke up their beasts, and they ran away from that ring of green light and rode for the eastern goblin village.



On the morning of the fifth day since leaving the village, war descended like a fierce storm.

^{Confusion}
“The divine god is great!”

“We’re under fire!”

As soon as word of an attack resounded, the spell of confusion came.

Soldiers came in droves without order and attacked them before the goblins could tell what was happening.

“Gi Da, take lady Reshia, and run!” Gi Ga said. “Lord Lili, I leave the rest to you.”

Gi Ga jumped onto his black tiger and rode into the fray. He left Reshia to the spear-wielding Gi Da and the rest of the humans to Lili. As for him, he would deal with the opposing humans himself.

“Three goblins, one group! The humans are nothing as long as we work together!” Gi Ga ordered.

At his behest, the once confused goblins woke up and fought the humans. Goblins were originally stronger than humans. It was only because of the humans’ intellect that allowed them to take an edge over the goblins. So what happens then when the goblins themselves make use of that same intellect? The answer was simple, the humans would fall into a disadvantage.

Moreover—

“What is that goblin!? It’s riding on something!”

The entrance of the never-before seen rider-beast and the goblin with an unusually long arm riding it shocked the men, as he pierced one soldier through the chest with his iron spear, and swung it while it was still lodged into the man. The man’s body flew through the sky before crashing into the ground. Whatever psychological or physical advantage the humans may have gotten at the start was suddenly blown away.

“Onwards!”

Gi Ga led the goblins against the humans who attacked them by surprise. But despite their unfavorable start, Gi Ga’s wise response allowed them to bring the fight back to the humans.



Status	
Name	Wyatt Kinoboogu
Race	Human
Level	65
Job	Expert Adventurer
Possessed Skills	Vajra; Shield Rush; Steadfast; Inspire; Sword Mastery B-; Axe Mastery C+; Veteran;
Divine Protection	None
Attributes	None

Vajra

—Defense is temporary greatly increased, but physical strength is slightly reduced along with physical attack.

Shield Rush

—Can attack with the shield. The shield won't be damaged when this ability is used.

Steadfast

—Endurance will recover unless attacked by the enemy. (MEDIUM)

Inspire

—Suppresses the confusion of your allies. (MEDIUM).

—Raises the morale and physical attack of your allies. (LOW)

Veteran

—Critical rate is increased when fighting against someone of a lower class, while defense is increased when fighting someone of a higher class.

Author's Note:

The boundaries separating man from monster grow ever thinner. Who do you like the most? The steadily pursuing Gulland, Gowen, or perhaps the eerie Gene?

TI's Note:

Changing swordsmanship to sword mastery for the sake of uniformity amongst the weapon mastery skills. e.g. Sword Mastery C+, Axe Mastery C+... etc.

INTERMISSION

A CALM STRATEGY

By the time Mill and Fick returned to camp, Ranid's soldiers were everywhere. They looked at each other before deciding to go the center of the camp, where they found the two holy knights glaring at each other.

The atmosphere was so tense it felt like a fight could break out any time.

Surrounded by the soldiers and Wyatt, it was Gulland who first spoke.

"So, why does the iron-armed knight want us to fight with these small fries? Honestly, these men of yours are nothing more than dead weight," Gulland sneered.

Compared to Gulland's belligerent attitude, Gowen was as calm as ever. "There are many goblins. It is only reasonable that you use my men to ensure that not a single one slips through. I can't be at ease unless you take this tenth of my men."

Indeed, the goblins numbered almost a hundred. Regardless how strong the adventurers are, that was not a number they could completely exterminate. Be that as it may, the adventurers had their pride. They could not just nod their heads and agree to Gowen's proposal. After all, was it not them who fought the enemy and chased them this far?

"Bastard... Don't you think you're being too selfish coming in at the last moment just to take the best part?" Gulland reached for the great sword on his back.

The adventurers watching from the sides all felt the great bloodlust emanating from the hero-adventurer, and so they braced themselves. If things were to turn for the worse, they might just end up fighting the feudal lord himself.

"Let's not forget our prior agreement: to use the resources at our disposal to invade the fortress, while trying our hands at rescuing the saint." Gowen looked down on Gulland with his pair of cold eyes. The chill from those two eyes of his could be felt even through that fiery bloodlust emanating from Gulland.

“Hmph... In other words, you’re saying we’re stupid for getting riled up.”

Gulland’s gaze was sharp yet, but he had already let go of the hilt of his great sword.

“Just do as you please,” Gowen said.

“I will,” Gulland sneered, but Gowen only ignored him.

After seeing the two wrap up their discussion, Fick shrewdly approached Gulland to report their earlier findings.

“Go report to that bastard too.”

“Are you sure?”

Much to Fick’s surprise, Gulland ferociously smiled and then nodded.

“Gather everyone. Gowen isn’t the only one with tricks.”

Shrugging his shoulders, Fick reported to Gowen too.

“Can we trust this intel?” The leader of the Yuan Scout Party asked.

Gowen nodded. “They’re most likely thinking of a way to get one over us, but... That’s alright.”

Narrowing his eyes, Gowen looked toward the direction of the yet unseen goblin horde.

“We will attack the goblins alongside them upon daybreak.”



Gowen’s army numbered approximately a hundred as they marched through the forest. They were dressed in leather armor and equipped with a spear or a sword and shield, all of which were provided by Gowen himself.

“There is no need to push yourselves too hard. Their great number will surely make it difficult, so all we need to do is to attract their attention,” Gowen said, to which a young

man, and then the rest of the boys nodded.

As long as they caught the enemy's attention, Gulland would surely enter the fray. That was a surety for someone like Gulland who froths at the mouth at the thought of securing the greatest merit in this search for the saint.

Gowen thought up this plan knowing that.

Secure the village left behind, and the first of the conditions will have been achieved. After that was a question of which holy knight would rescue the saint. Gene was in the forest, but there were no signs of him. For all Gowen knew he might already be dead or then again he might still be alive, but there was no knowing for sure.

That left only Gowen and Gulland to rescue the saint. Considering the future development of this forest, it would be most advantageous for Gowen to let Gulland rescue the saint.

The holy knight who started out as an adventurer rescued the saint!

Gulland would return to the country a hero, and aspiring young men would look up to him. With that Gowen would be able to use their young, ambitious hearts to develop the forest.

The profit did not lay in this immediate battle, but in the future. As he calmly came up with that plan, Gowen decided to sacrifice these young men he'd raised himself. They would be attacking the goblins from the front to attract their attention, so he knew full well that their losses would be great, but that couldn't be helped.

"It is a pity Gene is not here."

Regret flashed his eyes for an instant before returning to their usual frost, then as he planned coolly in his mind without showing the slightest hint of distress, he gave the orders to attack.



"Over here."

The spear-wielding Gi Da led Reshia, the humans who left the village, and the female

and baby goblins who could not fight. They ran to the west with six other warrior goblins, while Gi Da cut down the branches before him with his spear to create an easier path to traverse.

The goblins they had watching at the back were all elite. They were chosen by Gi Ga himself beforehand, and they all kept going even as the sun shone upon the forest.

The sounds of battle grew more and more distant until half an hour later when they could no longer be heard, and Gi Da finally stopped to let Reshia and the others rest. But there would be no resting for Gi Da and the other warrior goblins, as he ordered them to patrol the surrounding area.

Gi Ga told him to protect Reshia at all costs, so it came as no surprise that Gi Da was more solemn than usual. He could not let his guard up even for a moment.

And then he felt something, bringing him to raise his spear.

“Lord Lili,” he said, prompting Lili to wield her sword as well. “Someone is here.”

Gathering the rest of the goblins, they huddled up around Reshia, and made sure not to make an eek. They stood as still as they could while they perked their ears to catch even the slightest sound in the vicinity.

The sound of the wind swaying the leaves, the sound of the wind itself... Then in that place where no one should’ve been, Gi Da spotted someone: the small figure of a human.

“Name yourself!” Gi Da pointed his spear.

“I have no name to give to a monster,” the small figure quietly said as she brandished her talons. There was anger in those words.

A black mask covered her whole head, while only the vital areas of her body were padded with armor.

“Lord Lili...”

The moment the black figure bolted, Gi Da realized he could not win, but it was too late. The black figure was fast, so fast it made Gi Da wonder where she was getting all

that power.

Gi Da struck out with his spear, but the black figure easily slipped past him, jumping over his shoulder as she drew an arc in the air and landed right in front of Lili, who immediately drew her sword.

“Tch... I’m not your enemy!” The figure said as she blocked Lili’s sword with her talons.

It seemed this assailant was severely shocked when Lili drew her sword against her.

“Huh?” Lili was at a lost. The enemy before her did not want to fight her. But then the other goblin warriors came up when they saw Lili in trouble.

“Tch!?”

The black figure dodged the goblins clubs one after another like a butterfly floating in the air, but the moment she landed on the ground, Gi Da’s spear was waiting for her. But even that sudden attack that that figure could in no way have seen coming was dodged by a hair’s breadth. As Gi Da watched the figure make some distance between them, he had no choice but to accept that this was someone far above his level.

“Gi Gi...” Gi Da who was standing before Lili and Reshia to protect them pointed his spear to this unknown assailant. “Lord Lili, please take care of the rest. We will take care of this one, so—”

But the black figure moved before Gi Da could finish talking. In response, Gi Da formed a three-man group with the other goblins to fight off the black figure.

“Go!”

Gi Da struck out his spear with all of his strength, but the black figure easily received his blow. At this point, it was clear as day that that figure’s talons would bury themselves into Gi Da’s flesh, but that was exactly what Gi Da was aiming for. As the talons reached for his wounded shoulder—

“!?”

—The other goblins swung their clubs, and they slammed them into the legs and sides of the black figure; a coordinated attack that sacrificed Gi Da’s body.

“Gaha... Ku...” Thrown into the ground, the figure squirmed in pain.

Gi Da was on his knees as well, but he somehow managed to stand up with his spear.



“A wound like this...” The figure lifted the mask covering her face, revealing her identity as the mage killer, Mill. A wound like this was truly nothing to her. The Blessing of the Fire God would immediately heal it given some time, but that was also the problem... She needed some time.

“Lord Lili, please go! Run!” Gi Da urged, even as blood flowed from his shoulder, even as the hand he held his spear with was dyed in blood.

“Ku...” Enduring the urge to throw up, Mill calculated the distance between her and Gi Da. If Reshia were to run now, the injury she’d received on her legs would mean that she would never catch up. She needed to overcome this now.

The goblin before her wasn’t in good shape either. He most likely wouldn’t be able to fight well, but he still wrung the last of his strength to finish her after letting Reshia’s group run.

Mill dragged her legs along with the pain on her side. Thinking back on it, she was too impatient. Even if she did fight the goblins to rescue Reshia, and even if she was taken aback with Lili challenging her, she was still too impatient.

Glancing to the side where her fallen mask lay, Mill brandished her talons once again. She would defeat the enemy before her and rescue Reshia. In an instant, all the impatience clouding her judgment cleared up, and her concentration reached its peak.

Like a lone thread strained to the limit, Gi Da who studied the spear under Gi Ga suddenly hesitated to take a step.

Common sense dictated that finishing off a weakened prey was an easy task.

But the pressure emanating from the prey before him now made him hesitate.

Gi Da grit his teeth. What was this sinister pressure? He had to finish her off, if not, he

wouldn't be able to accomplish his mission. And yet!

Stifling his fear, Gi Da trudged on. Then as he gathered his killing intent onto the tip of the spear, he made himself forget about the wound on his shoulder, and he closed in on the wounded prey.

But just as he stepped near enough his prey, at that very border where either one of them could hit the other, the high-pitched scream of a human resounded from somewhere.

Immediately, the two warriors, one human, one goblin, looked toward the direction of that scream.



Status	
Name	Gowen Ranid
Race	Human
Level	90
Job	Holy Knight; Iron-Armed Knight; Feudal Lord
Possessed Skills	Axe Mastery B+; Sword Mastery B+; Spear Mastery A-; Bow Mastery B+; Leadership; Unlimited Training; Battle-Scarred Knight; Thousand-Demon Slayer; Creator's Blessing; Pursues the Martial Peak; Martial Barrier
Divine Protection	None
Attributes	None

Unlimited Training

—Previously translated as unlimited experience. Increases growth, but limits growth rate according to the number of enemies defeated. (LOW to MEDIUM)

Battle-Scarred Knight

—Charm towards those of lower or equal classes. Mental attacks from higher classes are rendered mute.

Thousand-Demon Slayer

—After killing a monster health regeneration up (LOW), attack up (LOW), and defense up (LOW).

Creator's Blessing

—Charm is increased when leading those of the same race (MEDIUM). The attacking power of the races led is also increased (LOW).

Pursues the Martial Peak

—Previously translated as Seeker of the Martial God. Resistance to magic attacks (MEDIUM).

Martial Barrier

—This should have been translated as something before, but my notes are missing an entry. Can render attacks from every weapon mute (MEDIUM) and increase defense (HIGH) at the cost of greater burden on the body (MEDIUM).

Gi Ga's level has risen.

89 -> 90

INTERMISSION

THE REACHING EVIL

Mill and Gi Da ran at almost the same time when they heard that scream, but because of her injuries, it was Gi Da who arrived first.

There Gi Da saw that a fearsome adventurer had caught Reshia by the neck, prompting Lili to quickly reach for the sword by her waist. But it was neither her nor Reshia who had screamed just now, but the human women who had followed Reshia.

“GU, GURURUAa!”

Anger filled Gi Da at the sight of the king’s treasure being manhandled, and he kicked off the ground to strike out his spear against the adventurer.

“Hmph.”

But Gulland only snorted as he brandished his sword and easily dodged Gi Da’s spear. In the next instant, blood spurted out of Gi Da, and he fell to the ground.

“Let go!” Reshia demanded, but Gulland only laughed at her.

Then he saw Lili point her blade at him. “What are you doing? I’m not so nice as to hold back against little kids and women.”

Like a voice from hell, it chilled Lili’s heart when she heard it. But enduring the chill running up her back she only prayed she would not shake holding her sword as she glared at the man before her.

“If you raise your hand against my master, then I will stop you even at the cost my life.”

“Master, huh? You should go play house elsewhere, this here’s my playground, you see.”

Gulland swung his great sword.

Lili found her legs shaking at that, and for a moment she even felt death, causing her to reflexively close her eyes.

But the blade never came, and what resounded next were only the sounds of metals clanging and a tongue clicking.

“...What are you doing?” Gulland asked, to which the assassin answered in a voice filled with more hate than when she spoke to the goblins. “What am I doing? What are YOU doing, Gulland? Let go of her now!”

Mill had jumped over Gulland and attacked him, then after fixing her posture, stood opposite him.

“And if I say I won’t?” Gulland choked Reshia even harder, causing her to choke.

“I will cut those fingers!” As Mill grit her teeth loud enough to be heard, she jumped high up in the air with her talons crossed over each other. Lili wasn’t sure what was going on, but she held her sword anyway and went after Gulland. The both of them together should be enough to deal with one adventurer.

But things didn’t go the way they expected. Gulland’s great sword, heavy as it was, was much faster than they could have ever thought. He easily parried Mill’s attack from above while deflecting Lili’s attack from below.

“What’s the matter girls? Didn’t you want to play? Well, bring it on!”

While Gulland made fun of the two girls, the sound of a pained groaned suddenly reached their ears.

“The hell?” Gulland said looking down on his feet from which a small layer of skin had been cut. It was Gi Da who had cut him. And though it was but a scratch, that attack had done more than enough: it managed to get his attention. And that was not something Lili or Mill would let pass.

“Tch.”

Immediately, Lili unleashed her Three-Stage Slash against Gulland, who then blocked with his sword, but then sensing another presence from above, Gulland struck up towards the air, but his sword met nothing.

“What?” Gulland said in surprise.

“Over here,” Mill said as she struck out with her talons toward the hand holding Reshia. At that, even Gulland had no choice but to let go and withdraw his hand.

“Lady Reshia!” Mill called out.

Reshia was momentarily shocked upon seeing Mill so earnestly run up to her, but she quickly shook that off and ran up to the wounded Gi Da.

“^{Heal}
Solace to all.”

As that healing light wrapped itself around the goblin, everyone was taken in by Reshia’s heavenly face. The light stopped the gushing of the blood from the wound as it healed the goblin. It was truly a miracle, and everyone who saw it couldn’t help but be charmed. There were even some among the humans who had followed Reshia begin offering prayers to her.

There was a world of difference between Reshia’s Heal and the White Hand of Life’s. When Reshia used Heal a great amount of mana gathered in the area, so much so that it seemed even the spirits would kneel. And the afterglow upon her after healing made it seem as if the world was blessing her. That resplendent figure of hers was truly beautiful.

Her velvety fingers flowed, and light, fleeting like fireflies, followed after them. Then as she gently touched Gi Da’s body, the lights entered him, and life came back to the goblin.

Gulland stepped forward. “That’s a pretty good skill, lady. It makes me want you.”

Gulland spoke haughtily, but Reshia didn’t react, as she only focused on healing the goblin. But that only roused Gulland’s interest even more.

The knight who’d sworn loyalty to her and the assassin with a favor to pay stood before Gulland.

“Why are you stopping me?” Gulland asked.

There was scorn in those words, but more than that was the desire in his eyes.

“I’ll kill you,” he spat, to which Mill spat back with new found hate, “The feeling’s mutual.”

At that, Lili also readied her sword, and they both prepared to face Gulland.

“You know if you’re worrying whether I would kill that girl or not, you can relax. I took on a job to bring that girl back. There’s no way I’d kill her, right?” Gulland reasoned.

“I wonder...” Mill said as her eyes brimmed with killing intent.

“Man, can’t a guy get some trust here? But you know we really can’t have that girl healing any more goblins than this. If you’re not gonna move, then you better stop her.”

Though as arrogant as ever, there was some truth in his words that Mill couldn’t deny. After all, she had been fighting monsters day after day, so Reshia’s behavior was truly not something she could comprehend.

But just when Mill was about to call out to Reshia...

“Just kidding!!” Gulland swung his great sword with both of his arms. Mill managed to defend with her talons, but she still reacted too late, and she had no choice but to take on the brunt of Gulland’s attack.

“Kuhaa!” Sent flying by Gulland’s attack, Mill crashed into a tree, and then slid down to the ground.

Gulland went after Lili next, but though she managed to block his attack by luck, Gulland’s attack dragged her for several meters until her body finally couldn’t take it, and she was sent flying along with her sword.

“Now, Ms. Saint, if you would just kindly move your hands away from that thing.” Gulland said as he pointed his sword at Reshia.

Looking up at Gulland, Reshia said, “There are no monsters or humans before me. If someone is wounded, I will heal them.”

“Oh, how nice. Then in that case why don’t you go and heal those two I just sent flying. I might have held back, but they won’t be moving for a while like that.”

Gulland didn’t mind at all that Reshia was glaring at him, but when he noticed that she had no intention of moving, he hit her on the cheek.

“You’re in the way, girl. You want to heal the wounded? Why don’t you go bring that house playing of yours to those peace-loving idiots. I’m sure those perverted old geezers would happily wave their tails for you!”

“What are you doing!?”

Even as her cheeks ached, Reshia kept her sharp gaze at Gulland, who had brought his sword up.

“You went through all that trouble to heal this thing, but too bad! Because it’s gonna turn into a corpse anyway! Ha ha ha ha!!”

As the wind wrapped around the sword and lightning crackled, the sword spun.

A sword of storms gathered around Gulland’s sword.

“Stop it!” But Reshia fearlessly covered for the goblin.

“G-Gulland...”

“Lady Reshia...”

Seeing the other two girls stand up, Gulland snapped his tongue.

“Tch... Stupid brats!”

But just when Gulland was about to let loose his sword, a cold voice resounded.

“Let loose that sword, and you’ll find yourself guilty of treason.”

“...Gowen Ranid,” Gulland muttered with a sour face as Gowen Ranid leisurely approached him and the saint with his long sword drawn.

“Reshia Fel Zeal, I presume?” Gowen said to the saint.

“Yes,” she replied.

“Would you do us the honor of traveling with us? It is a request from the king.”

Reshia sent a fleeting glance at the goblins before making her decision. There were women and children amongst the goblin. If she refused here, these men would surely try to take her by force. And with no power of her own to resist, it would be nothing more than a futile attempt.

“If I go will you leave the goblins alone?” Reshia asked not to Gulland but to Gowen. The latter seemed more trustworthy after all.

“...Very well.”

“Please make it so that Master Gulland won’t lay a hand on them either.”

Gowen looked toward Gulland.

“Go bring the saint home, Knight of Storms... You understand what I’m getting at, right?”

“You’re giving up merit of the saint? What are you scheming?” Gulland asked as he gripped his sword.

“I have my reasons,” Gowen calmly replied.

After diligently thinking about it, Gulland agreed, “...Fine. I’ll go back. The goblins ain’t interesting anyway.”

Then as he smiled a fierce smile, he looked toward Mill. “Mill, go guide our saint. I’m sure you can do at least that much, right?”

Mill hated Gulland to the pith of her bones, but her respect for Reshia went above that, so she quietly nodded and approached Reshia. When Reshia’s fingers touched her, a light enveloped her whole body, and in the next instant, her wounds were healed. She’d been heaving and puffing all this time, and yet a mere touch was all it took to bring her back to shape. But what’s more was that the warmth from that light made

her feel guilty for keeping some secrets.

“...Thank you very much,” she said.

“I didn’t know you became an adventurer,” Reshia said.

“Sorry, I know I should’ve told you, but...”

After a short exchange, Reshia, Mill, and Lili went together.

“GURUuu... Lord Lili, Lady Reshia!? Where are... you going!?”

Gi Da bellowed angrily when he woke up. Immediately, Reshia tried to warn him.

“No, Gi Da!”

But Reshia’s words were too slow for Gulland’s swift sword.

And all that sounded next were the cries of a monster and the sadistic laugh of a man.

“What have you done!”

Reshia tried to go to Gi Da, but Gulland grabbed her.

“You don’t have to heal it. Take her away, Mill.”

Though pained, Mill nodded and forcefully took Reshia away.

“Forgive me, Lady Reshia.”

She would not let her approach the “monsters” any longer.

“Lili!” Reshia called, and Lili stood between Gulland and Gi Da.

“Isn’t it enough!? This goblin can no longer fight.”

Lili unsheathed her sword, and Gulland walked away sneering under his breath,
“Suffer and die for that is the punishment of wounding me.”

Gowen looked at Lili before following after Gowen, but he didn't say anything. When Lili took a look at Gi Da, she gasped.

Gulland's attack had pierced his lungs, and his left arm was broken.

—I can't save him.

But she still stopped the bleeding and bandaged the goblin. When she ran out of gauze, she cut a part of her clothes.

"Forgive me, Gi Da. I have to protect Lady Reshia. You will have to go the rest by yourselves."

Leaving only those words, Lili stood up.

"I'm sorry... I..."

As she held her fists tight, she cursed her own weakness.

Then she went to the humans who were with the goblins and told them to decide for themselves whether they would go with Lady Reshia or live with the goblins.

The goblins all gathered around Gi Da, and while the humans looked at each other for a moment, in the end, they all decided to go with Reshia and Lili.

There's no helping it. Every time she thought that she couldn't help but curse her powerlessness.

"Kuun..."

The gray wolf, Gastra, rubbed itself by her feet as if to console her.

"You want to come too?"

Of course, the gray wolf could not possibly have understood her, but it barked back in response as if to console her.

CHAPTER 80

THE DEATH OF A WARRIOR

Status	
Race	Goblin
Level	1
Class	King; Ruler
Possessed Skills	Ruler of the Demon Children of Chaos; Defiant Soul; World Devouring Howl; Swordsmanship A-; Dominator; King's Soul; Ruler's Wisdom III; Household of the Gods; One-Eyed Snake's Evil Eye; The King's Dance at the Edge of Death; Magic Manipulation; Soul of the Berserk King; Third Impact (The Third Chant); Instinct; Blessing of the Underworld Goddess
Divine Protection	Goddess of the Underworld (Altesia)
Attributes	Darkness; Death
Subordinate Beasts	High Kobold Hasu (Lv1); Gastra (Lv20); Cynthia (Lv20); Orc King Bui (Lv40)
Abnormal Status	Blessing of the One-Eyed Snake; Protection of the Twin-Headed Snake

I feel weak.

I wouldn't even be able to walk if it weren't for this cloth Lord Lili wrapped around me.

...Walk.

"Gi Da..."

The old goblin who called out to me had a strange expression on his face. I wonder if it's because of the cold.

When I turned around, the comrades I risked my life to protect were there. I wish I had the strength to answer, but regretfully, I could only shake my head.

The king is there to the west.

Lord Gi Ga entrusted these goblins to me. I must see that they make it to the king.

“I must go...”

Without the strength to say a word more, I could only groan out those few words as I forced myself to walk.

The sound of water dripping resounded.

Oh, come to think of it, I am thirsty... Ah, if I could just reach the king, I would surely be able to drink my fill.

Why... is it so hard to walk?

My breath went ragged with every step, yet still I pushed on, clearing the branches in front to make a path for those behind.

It's cold... So cold...

My strength is waning...

“Ku...”

Tripping on my own feet, I inadvertently leaned on my spear, and as something gurgled its way up my stomach, I couldn't help but let it out because of how sick I felt.

...It was my blood.

So why? Why is it still so hard to move?

And why is it that everything I could see just fine moments ago is now suddenly so hazy.

It almost feels like walking underwater. My legs are so heavy it feels like they're stuffed with lead... Heavy... So heavy...

My strength is waning...

—Walk.

It's dark.

I could see even in moonless nights, so how is it that it's now so dark it feels like there's something covering my eyes?

I can't... go on. Why do I have to walk when it's so painful?

The humans aren't coming anyway...

Humans... Wasn't there someone I had to bring to the king?

Who was it again?

—Walk.

I had to lean onto my spear as if it were a cane to keep myself from falling to the ground.

Why?

Why mustn't I sit down? Even though it's so painful... Even though it's so cold...

The treasure of the king's gray wolf rubbed against my legs.

Are you... encouraging me?

...You shouldn't do that. You'll get blood on you.

—Walk.

Ah, right... The king! Our king!

My free hand was completely numb, every step I took sent blood flowing down my chest, and I couldn't even lift my spear to clear the path... but I pushed on, using my own body to clear the path.

O king! Our king!

It was only by calling that name that I could muster the tiniest bit of strength I had left.
Our king... Our king who fights for us...

His valiant figure as he subdued Lord Gi Ga and the rest of us lingers in my heart yet.

O king! Our king! I am coming—

To deliver to you your... our prized treasure—

“GURUuuUGA!”

Then in that darkness, where I could barely see, I suddenly heard the cry of a beast.
What was this again? Four legs... this beast... I think I’ve eaten it before...

Ah... Did it just snarl at me?

The lines between memory and reality started to blur.

I can hear them growling from my right... and my left.

What would Lord Gi Ga do in a situation like this? It was from him that I learned the spear... Ah, yes. Those days were certainly the best.

I can hear someone screaming from behind. Why? Why are they screaming? Why is Lord Gi Ga...

Ahh... Right, it was during that one-on-one battle...

That time... Lord Gi Ga struck his sword toward that sword-swinging human like this.

Yes, just like this.

It was when I fought this beast for the first time that Lord Gi Ga taught it to me.

Yes, now one more time.

Ahh, I can't anymore. My body is about to collapse, so I took back the spear I tried to thrust and balanced myself.

Still... why is it so dark?

If I listen carefully, I can hear the beasts breathing. Ahh, right. Lord Gi Ga did once say I shouldn't follow them with my eyes.

"Gi, —"

Right, just like this.

Then everything went quiet again.

I can walk again—

"—, Gi,"

I threw up blood again. I might have moved too much... But just a little bit more.

Ahh, something big is coming from in front.

It's big, really big... Ahh... I can feel the king.

Our king...

"Gi Da," a voice called out.

I remember that name, the name the king gave to me... The name that... belongs only to...

It's the king! Our king!

"You did well coming here," the king said.

Then something big took me into his arms.

Suddenly, the cold left, and it felt warm again.

It was like the sun, shining brilliantly high up in the sky.

“I’m... sorr... King...”

You are our sun... The black flames that... Our...



I watched my loyal subordinate breathe his last moments in my arms.

His arm was crushed, his chest was pierced, yet still he walked on, protecting his horde until he could reach me. The goblins following Gi Da walked over the blood-stained road. They were the old, the females, and the young goblins.

“...Lord Gi Da did his best, my king,” the old goblin said.

“Say no more,” I said, “there’s no need.”

Gi Da’s body now drained of blood was light, and the bandages wrapped around his wounds had been dyed red until they seemed no different from black. His spear was broken in half, yet its tip was still tinged with the blood of a foe. Seeing him like this, I could tell just what kind of road he walked to get here.

Gi Da fulfilled his duty.

“Burn this memory to your minds, little ones,” I said to the young goblins, “This is the figure of a true warrior.”

As I gave a few words for Gi Da who had risked his life to fulfill his duty, I took the Iron Second from my back and wielded it.

“...You will pay for this, humans! You will pay for this!!”

The sky shook and the earth trembled as I cried out in great anger. As the World Devouring Howl activated, the trees of the forest shook, the birds flying nearby fell to the ground, and large beasts in the vicinity ran away.

Knowing the urgency of the situation, I’d sent out the beast-riders first, and led a horde of goblins myself, but because of the difference in abilities, I ended up going

ahead.

Normally, that's not something to be happy about, but just for today, I feel grateful for this power. For it was because of it that I could send off a warrior before he passed.

The seething anger within raged like flames inside my belly.

"Are the humans up ahead?" I asked the old goblin even as the anger could be felt from my breath alone.

"Yes, Lord Gi Zo and Lord Gi De have already been killed. And Lord Gi Ga Rax is currently missing."

What a disaster.

I cried out to the heavens for all that we've lost. The water mage, Gi Zo, the beast tamer, Gi De, and now, the spear-wielding Gi Da.

"I will go ahead. When the rest of the goblins come, give them my orders."

"Yes, King!"

"Tell them to chase out the humans! And carve into their bodies the sin of transgressing upon my land!"

Kicking off against the ground, I bolted off for the humans.

—Found them.

I sense a great crowd squirming.

So this is... human. This presence is human!

You will pay! For all the blood you've shed!!!



The adventurers went around while the feudal lord's army battled with the goblins from in front with the intention of attacking from behind, but when they did, they lost track of where the goblins had gone, so they split themselves and put up a couple of battle formations.

Then when they received word of the saint being "rescued", the Herculean Wyatt, the White Hand of Life, and the Wand of Destruction all began preparing to leave.

The battle with the goblins that started in the morning was already mostly over, so the adventurers were now on their way home.

"Anyway, it's good that everyone's safe... There were quite a bit of goblins, but at least, we completed our mission," Wyatt said while Vitz stuffed himself as if they were celebrating.

"By the way, where is the saint?" The White Hand of Life asked.

"She went ahead to the village, Mill followed her to care for her. Actually, shouldn't you be going too, White Hand of Life?" Hawk-Eyed Fick said.

"I specialize in healing wounds of the body. Wounds of the mind is something that's always been treatable only by human bonds. God himself says so." The white Hand of Life meekly laughed.

"Well, she was caught by goblins... Anyway, it looks like Gulland is a hero now, huh," Hawk-Eyed Fick said.

"Looks like it. I guess we should start calling him hero now," Wyatt said jokingly with a stiff face.

"Give me a break," the former knight, Bellan, who hated formalities said.

And then everyone broke into laughter.

"In any case, it's good that everything ended hap—"

Suddenly, a howl resounded deep into the forest, and everyone's body stiffened.

“—What was that just now?” Vitz asked.

“Put out the fire,” Wyatt quickly said, “and ready your weapons.”

Wyatt quickly wiped the sweat off his body as he readied his equipment.

“No matter what you do, absolutely don’t make an eek, ok!” Wyatt frantically warned in a way that was completely unlike his usually calm composure.

“Why? Is something coming?” Vitz asked.

“I don’t know... I can’t see either,” Hawk-Eyed Fick said.

“...This might be the strongest one yet.”

Just a short distance away from them was the camp for one of the squads of the feudal lord’s army. Everyone else except for those on watch were already asleep. And of those awake, they were either cooking something or working on their equipment.

Because of how big the feudal lord’s army was, they couldn’t set camp in just one place, so they instead split themselves in several camps of 20 men around the village.

“Are you sure we shouldn’t inform them?” Vitz asked.

“If you go, you’ll be the one to die. Though I suppose if that were to happen then that too must be the will of god,” the White Hand of Life jokingly said.

What a convenient god, thought Vitz, though he didn’t try to object.

As the thickets were pushed aside and something seemed to slip through the trees, a giant shadow with terrifying speed came to view.

“GURUUuuuAaaA a AA!!”

That howl shook heaven and earth as it reverberated under the night sky.

Not a man in the feudal lord’s camp stood still upon hearing that wrathful cry; they all picked up their weapons while shaking in fright.

“Surrender and your lives will be spared!” The monster declared.

To which Vitz immediately thought, Yes please! If it means being spared from this fear. But unfortunately for him, the soldiers of Gowen’s army were too courageous for their own good.

“M-Monster!!”

And when one of them took out his sword, the rest of the soldiers followed.

But that courage was nothing more than foolishness, for a swing of the monster’s great sword was all it took to cut down one of them in half, from head to crotch, the thick armor equipped be damned; it was a power that struck fear into their hearts.

What came after was a massacre.

In no time at all, one of the camps of the feudal lord’s army was extinguished.

The monster seemed to howl again because of its great anger, but for some reason no one could understand, it almost seemed as if it was howling to forget its grief.

Author’s Note:

Gi Da died in action, but did you enjoy his last struggle?

Also, it appears that the king is here, at long last. Could this be the beginning of the goblins’ counterattack?

CHAPTER 81

GNAWING FANGS

“GURUuUuAAaOOOo!”

The enemy cowered at the sound of my howls.

After destroying one of their camps, I moved on to the next.

Reshia should be somewhere nearby.

I have to find her and bring her back... Not just for mine, but also for the sake of those who’ve died.

“...It’s here!”

When I looked up there was a line of armored men with their spears brandished. They were coordinated and their movements showed signs of great practice; a formidable enemy?

“Push out!!”

Hiding their bodies behind their shields, they struck out their spears through the opening between their shields. It was a formation reminiscent of a hedgehog.

But that line of sharp spears that could tear into my flesh if I were to crash into it didn’t affect my movements in the slightest.

“OOooOOOAAo!”

With great strength, I mowed down their formation, scattering their spears and toppling the humans. Some of them were on their backs now, but I had no intention of showing mercy.

Slipping through the opened gaps between their shields, I struck down every man that came to view, dyeing the black of the night in the red of their blood, gushing from their

dismembered limbs and torsos.

“Mon... ster...”

One of the humans whose arm I’d cut, lifted his head and watched with trepidation as I let loose the last blow to claim his life. I watched as he sunk in the puddle of blood, then I looked around me.

Where is she!?

“RESHIAaa!!!”

My voice echoed throughout the forest.



The soldiers were tasked to report regularly, but no word had come.

Gowen knitted his brows at that, and for some reason, his old wounds even ached.

“Hmm... The situation might have turned for the worse...”

Being an old veteran and a holy knight with a long history of achievements, Gowen was not the sort to lose his cool even in the worst predicaments.

“It’s a bit early, but send word to Gulland. Tell him to leave ahead of time with the armored carriage,” Gowen said to the messenger.

The soldiers Gowen had set around the village were all promising, young men who had sworn their allegiance to him. There was only one reason for them to fail their regular reports, and that was that something was keeping them from doing so.

And the only thing that could possibly do that in this Forest of Darkness was...

“Either the orcs attacked or the goblins from this morning did,” Gowen said.

But even an ogre shouldn’t be able to keep even a single rider from bringing word.

In that case, the enemy must have brought a sizable horde and extinguished my men

before they could even send word.

“One more thing,” Gowen said to the messenger, “wake up the soldiers and have them gather around the village. Have them assume a tight formation. As for the horsemen, have them call for reinforcements from the fief.”

Quietly gazing into the dark of the night, Gowen quickly put together a plan to use the village and attack the enemy.

“...Wary, aren’t we?” Gulland said.

“So you were awake.” Gowen replied.

He should have been sleeping just moments ago, yet here he was, alert as ever, without the slightest signs of having just woken up. The presence that emanated from him was truly that of a man about to head to battle, and he even fearlessly laughed.

“Take the saint and leave the forest ahead of us,” Gowen said, “I have my own preparations to make here.”

“Hmph... Well, fine, but what about those adventurers I hired?” Gulland said.

“I can’t contact any of my men,” Gowen said, “I doubt it would be possible to contact a group under a different chain of command given the circumstances at hand.”

“Hmm... I see.”

Gulland appeared to be thoughtful for a moment, but not long after, he grinned a big smile and nodded.

“Fine, the biggest prize here is that girl after all,” Gulland said as he looked toward the direction of the biggest house in the village, the house of the king which Gi Za had asked to be made.

“I’ll be sleeping until then, so just wake me up when you’re ready.” Gulland said before leaving.

“Lowly adventurer, who does he think he is?” Spat one of the guards who was always beside Gowen.

“Let him be,” Gowen said.

“But still! Even if it is for the sake of the saint, going so far as to even ready the armored carriage is just...! We’re just handing all the merits to that man! This—”

The man would have said more, but Gowen’s gaze silenced him.

“...That thing is moving by its own will. Did you notice any bruises or any injuries on the saint?”

“No.”

“The goblins and the orcs are slaves of desire. And yet... there isn’t a single wound on the saint.”

“I’m not sure myself, but... Isn’t that because of the saint?”

“Perhaps, but... There might be another reason. The monster that caught the saint just might be able to think; a monster capable of suppressing its desire.”

“Surely, that’s impossible.”

“A horde of goblins that transcends common sense, a horde of weakened orcs... When you think about it like that, everything starts to make sense.”

“Then... is that monster?”

Gowen gazed into the dark of the night as he fondled his mustache.

“It might just be headed here at this very moment. That’s probably why Gulland agreed.”

“That man actually thought that far?”

“Otherwise, I doubt he would have meekly obeyed. That man’s stronger than me, you know. At least, when it comes to raw strength.”

The guard looked toward the direction of Gulland’s shed.

“Gulland Rifenin... The incarnation of hate.”

As the corners of his lips rose, Gowen smiled a cold smile to the approaching enemy.



Something is wrong. I’ve been attacking the brightly lit camps for a while now, but there’s no one to be found. These eyes can see well in the dark, but the bright campfires are keeping me from seeing elsewhere.

It’s annoying, but I’ll just have to crush every single one of them.

Calming myself as I caught my breath, I focused my consciousness. I should be able to feel their presence through the air as long as I’m able to stir them up. There’s no way they’ve already retreated, they must still be here.

But where?

Spreading my consciousness thin like a paper, I searched the surrounding area for humans.

Then something touched it...

“Damn! It’s coming!”

The voice of a human, and the swaying of branches, up a tree, 100 meters away from me.

I bolted off.

—Found them!

I measured the distance to my prey with my Iron Second.

“...It’s fast!”

“GURUuuuOOAOo!”

I swung my sword down with my cry.

“Guardian,
“Vajra!”

But the bigger man stopped it with that lump of iron of his.

“Wyatt!?”

“Go! I’ll stop this thing here!”

As the bigger man shouted, the smaller man retreated.

I kicked that lump of iron away as I pulled back my sword to create some distance between us. Then as I kept a watchful eye out, I gathered my thoughts.

Just now, this man said, ‘Go!’ Where would a human most likely go at a time like this? There’s only one answer: to a place with more humans!

“You will let me pass.”

If I waste time here, that smaller man might escape. The bigger man looked surprise when I spoke.

“If you can speak this well, you must be capable of thought.”

“My subordinates, did they not speak as well!”

I slashed diagonally up the iron-like man. The force behind that attack was strong enough to send an average man flying, but the man only swayed a little before reassuming his stance.

That was over half of my strength.

“Sorry, but if I let you pass, my friends will die. Come!”

The man’s spirit was fierce, and I felt chills crawl up me. This man is strong. I can tell even if I don’t want to, but I wielded my great sword all the same.

If he won't break in one hit, then I'll hit him as many times as I need to!

Wielding my great sword over my shoulder, I swung it down with great speed. The sound of metal hitting metal resounded in the forest. The man used something akin to a defense technique as he parried my blows with that shield that covered his whole body.

My irritation gradually piled with every blow swung. This man is just trying to buy time. He's desperately trying to buy time for that smaller man to escape.

'To protect his friend', he says... Then why? Why did you kill my people when you could think such things? Gi Da's death flickered in my mind for a moment, but what really angered me was that I fell for the enemy's plan, and couldn't even break this man's defense. What angered me the most was me!

Enchant
"Turn me into a blade!"

Black flames wrapped around my great sword, and because of the One-Eyed Snake's Evil Eye, the smooth permeation of ether made the great sword appear to flare up.

"Why did you!—"

With a swing of my great sword, I cut down the shield in half, but the man behind that managed to get away in time and wield his axe.

"—Kill my people!!

Jumping high up, I slashed down with the weight and power of my great sword.

"...!?"

The man managed to dodge at the last moment, leaving the tree behind him to be cut all the way to its roots. By the time I turned, there were already other humans with the big man.

"Bellan, Vitz, White Hand of Life!"

Judging from the look of surprise on the man's face, this turn of events must be

unexpected even for him, but it doesn't matter. Because nothing can stand in my way!

“O sword! Summon forth the flam^{Fire Sword}”

One of the new men swung a sword clad in flames, but that was not something that could win against my Enchant, and his sword was flicked off when our swords clashed.

But just when I was about to pursue, I felt pain at my feet.

There's a fast one with them!

But—!

“The light of god^{Light} will show the”

Suddenly, light filled my vision.

CHAPTER 82

BEGIN

I can't stop sweating.

That monster was just too scary. I hit it with my sword, but instead of cutting its arm, I just ended up numbing my own. I shiver at the thought of that monster still running around in the dark.

"Are you alright, Wyatt?"

The Herculean Wyatt, renowned for his skill with the shield, but even he could not fully defend against the relentless sword of the monster. They managed to run away with the help of the White Hand of Life's magic, but it was doubtful the same trick would work twice.

A simple magic that flashed a great light to blind the enemy, forcing the monster to close its eyes and retreat.

"I'm fine, but... I don't want to fight that thing again," Wyatt scowled.

Vitz nodded. "Bellan's sword broke too."

"To think my sword would actually crack in one hit, I still have much to learn." Bellan's countenance as he ran while watching the back was grim. So grim, in fact, that one could tell even in the darkness. But that was only a given, after all all the confidence he had built up to this day was in one fell swoop crushed.

"I wonder if Fick managed to safely run," Vitz asked.

"Let's pray he did," the White Hand of Life said.

Talking among themselves as they ran, they made way for the village where Gulland was. Their only hopes for winning was to surround the monster and overwhelm it with their numbers, forcefully exhausting its strength until it was too weak to resist.

For some reason, however, Vitz could not imagine that monster kneeling.



The night was coming to an end. A faint light could be seen extending from the eastern sky, and the forest was there to greet it.

I chased after that big man from awhile ago and attacked a couple of camps along the way, but by the third and fourth camp, it became apparent that the humans were taking refuge somewhere.

But where?

There were roughly 20 humans in the first camp. The rest of the camps I've seen until now seemed to be about the same size as the first one. If so, then taking into consideration the number I've killed, it should be a place able to accommodate at least 40 humans.

Could they be at the village? Or perhaps the lake to the north?

Calm down. I need to think. Where would the humans hold themselves up? That watery area the lizard men frequented? Or perhaps they would prefer the village with its houses fit for humans?

But why would they retreat anyway? Did they realize they were under attack? If they did, then there's someone with a good head among them.

I've been running all this time, but it seems I'll have to gather my thoughts first.

The humans are at the village, and there's not much time. If the humans are gathering, then they must be doing so with a plan in mind. They could be retreating, but they could also be gearing up for another attack. Alternatively, they could be strengthening the village's defense instead. In any case, I have to hurry.

If they retreat, I will pursue.

If they attack, I will stop them.

And if they try to strengthen the village defenses, I will attack before they finish.

It's often said that time is gold. And tonight there isn't a proverb more fitting, for it is exactly time that will decide the goblins' fate and mine.



"Hmph, not too shabby," Gulland snorted as he watched men on horses going to and fro the cleared road.

Gowen's subordinates had skillfully readied the carriage, while also managing to quickly contact the fief.

"It's proof of the feudal lord's excellent planning. Now, we just need to pass the forest, as the feudal lord's true army is waiting for us on the other side."

Gowen was truly remarkable. He not only managed to quickly ready the armored carriage, which Gulland, Mill, Reshia, and Lili would be riding, but he also managed to have the army station themselves by the forest's exit, and have the escorts of the saint patrol the cleared road.

"Now be a good girl, and go in the carriage," Gulland said to Reshia as he urged her in.

Then he turned to Mill. "Make sure you properly protect the saint, alright?"

"You don't need to tell me," Mill spat, and Gulland haughtily laughed.

"You know how to drive a carriage, right?" Gulland asked Lili.

"I can," she replied.

"Then drive this thing. I'll write you a recommendation to the guild once we get out of the forest."

As a holy knight and an adventurer, Gulland's letter of recommendation was priceless.

Lili noted Reshia's downcast face, but she still nodded. She was worried about her, of course, as she understood how Reshia felt, but this concerned her future too, so in the end, she found herself in a dilemma.

As a knight who has sworn herself for the saint, she wanted to know what Reshia wanted. If Reshia decided to sacrifice all that she had in the human world to live here in the forest, then Lili would stake her life to battle Gulland and Gowen. She would do so even if Mill were to try and fight her.

But when she thought about it, Reshia only lived alongside the goblins because they kidnapped her. She did not come here on her own volition. This simple fact became the seed for Lili's doubt.

Not to mention that the one ordering her was none other than the holy knight and adventurer, Gulland. A man renowned throughout the country. It was not easy to go against his orders.

In the end, Lili decided to ask Reshia herself. Though she did so with a gaze.

—Are you fine with this?

But she could not read anything from Reshia's downcast countenance.

"It's time. Make sure to hold those reins tight," Gulland said.

But just as Lili was about to urge the horse to go, a soldier's scream resounded.

"—Enemy attack!!"

When Lili turned around, what she saw were none other than Gi Gi and Hal, one riding on a Triple-Head and the other riding on a black tiger.



After seeing Gene passing through the circular green light, Gi Gi and the young chieftain, Hal, took a long detour and headed for the village. To their fortune, they did not meet any humans along the way and were able to near the village without having to fight a holy knight.

They saw a great number of humans when they sneaked about to scout the village. They also noted the horses among them, though this would be their first time seeing one.

Gi Gi was surprised at how much the forest had changed. The trees had been cut down, and roads were made in their place, upon which humans traversed on the backs of those mysterious four-legged beasts.

They were not completely clueless, however, as they have heard stories regarding the humans, so they knew that what the humans were doing must be that so-called 'Horse Riding'. Then as the noble class, Gi Gi, looked around, he saw the treasure of the king, Reshia. He also saw the female swordsman who battled Gi Ga. And he saw the both of them being pushed into this mysterious box.

He did not understand what was going on.

But he knew full well that the humans had committed an unforgivable crime.

They had stolen the treasure of the king.

"Lord Hal, let us begin." Wielding his axe in his hands, Gi Gi turned to the young chieftain beside him.

"I am somewhat concerned that the king is not here, but yes... We should begin," the young chieftain, Hal, said.

Gi Gi shook his head. "They have stolen the king's treasure. That is an unforgivable crime!"

Nodding, Hal ordered the iron legs of Paradua behind him to mount their beasts.

"Great warriors of Paradua! Rejoice! For tonight we carry the king's honor on the tip of our spears!"

As they ferociously brandished their spears, they charged into the village toward the patrolling horsemen.

"Onwards!!"

And so, with Hal and Gi Gi at the lead, the curtains upon the human-goblin war were drawn.

CHAPTER 83

WARRIORS, ONCE MORE

Along the way to the village, a human screamed.

“Over there!”

—It’s near.

I kicked off the ground, and bolted off for the sound of weapons clashing. As I did, I enchanted my sword, and black flames wrapped around it. They burned in the same rage that filled my heart.

“It’s a monster! They’re coming from behind too!”

It looks like they’re fighting someone up ahead.

I filled my arms and my legs with power, and when I was near enough, I slashed down with my great sword, cutting the human in half from shoulder to waist, letting loose a sea of blood that dyed the ground in its hue.

“There will be no mercy for those who resist!” I said while flicking off the blood from my blade.

But the humans did not cower at my proclamation, and instead formed a wall with their numbers, as they brought their shields forward and readied their spear in that “Hedgehog”-like formation they assumed earlier.

If that’s how you want it, then...

“Allow me to reward your courage with death!”

Wielding my great sword upon my shoulders, I ran toward the humans. My aim was the tip of their spears. I would attack in the same moment they did, so I left my flanks wide open to lure them.

When the humans struck out their spears—

“GURUuuOOoooOAaa!!”

I swung my great sword with my howl and broke their spears, but I didn’t stop there. I kept going, and wrecked havoc upon the now disarmed humans, sending forth those with shields with another swing, while I sent the rest on their way with a tackle, then I left them in the dust.

I went through them like a bull, never stopping once, for I knew that the worst case scenario was for me to be stopped. I might have the upper-hand in strength, but the power of numbers is not something that should ever be made light of.

I need to keep making the first move and pull the humans into my pace, or the odds of victory will be low.

“What is that monster!? Is that a goblin!?”

As screams and jeers resounded in the battlefield, I plunged my sword into another man.

As I cut my way through, I gradually closed in on the battle up ahead.



“Enemy attack? What poor timing.” Gowen stood with his hands upon his sword’s pommel as it stood erect from the ground, glaring toward the path ahead.

“I guess I’ll have to go then,” Gulland said as he attempted to join the fray.

“Just go with the carriage,” Gowen said without even turning to him. There was no waste among his words. Saying only what needed to be said, he stood there like a wall ready to stand against whatever might come.

“Mill, you drive this carriage until we leave the forest. Don’t stop no matter what,” Gulland said to Mill before climbing up the roof of the carriage and wielding his great sword, Blue Thunder. His daunting pose as he looked up the path ahead was truly heroic. He looked just like those heroes in tales of old. And despite her dislike for the man, even Mill couldn’t help but be fascinated when she saw that face beaming with

ferocity.

“Saying just whatever he wants!” Mill spat upon breaking out of that momentary trance, then she took the reins of the carriage and drove.

“I’m leaving you behind if you fall off!” Mill yelled angrily as she whipped the horse.

“The air reeks of blood and chaos. Yes, it’s that glorious smell of war!” Gulland laughed as the storms gathered around his sword, eagerly waiting for the enemy he would cut down.



The attack of the beast-riding squad led by Gi Gi and Hal dealt a decisive blow to the cavalry, but the foot soldiers that came to help afterwards brought back the battle to the goblins. But that was only a given, for the level ground favored the horses, not the black tigers, so when reinforcements started pouring in, the advantage swung back to the humans.

In the middle of such a difficult battle, it was only Gi Gi who noticed that the box Reshia had been pushed into had begun to depart.

“Lord Hal! Look!”

After slaying a horseman in one hit, and then helping out the other goblins, he approached Gi Gi.

“So that’s the king’s treasure!” Hal said.

“I’ll cover your back. It’ll be faster if you go,” Gi Gi said, then he rode on with his triple head and cut down a foot soldier with his axe.

“Ha ha! If you’re going to let me have the good parts, I’ll happily oblige! Onwards, Paradua!” Hal cheerfully laughed as he held the spear under his arms and charged for the armored carriage. Three Paradua Goblins followed after him, two at the flanks and one at the rear, while he – the young chieftain, Hal – led the charge with his beloved steed at the vanguard.

“They’re aiming for the carriage! Defend it!” Yelled one of the humans who seemed to

be a captain.

The humans lined up their spears, but Gi Gi broke their formation.

“Draw your swords!” The human captain ordered. “One-half will handle the ostrich, the other half will handle the tigers! Spears, get yourselves together!!!”

The captain of the humans was by no means a fool. When the formation broke, he immediately called for the foot soldiers to use their shields and swords to block Gi Gi, while the spears fixed their formation.

“Get their attention...” Hal rode with his black tiger directly toward the line of spears. There were trees to his flanks, there was no path to turn.

“Lord Hal!” Gi Gi cried out.

“—Now, spears!!!” The captain ordered.

“Jump, Miou!!!” Hal yelled.

Spears were thrust at the captain’s behest, but as Hal called out the name of his beloved steed, the black tiger jumped into the trees.

When the captain saw that, he laughed. *In that case, we’ll just kill you while you can’t move.*

But in the next instant, that huge grin on his face froze.

“OOooOoOo!” Hal bellowed out.

The black tiger grabbed onto the twisted trees, then without slowing down for even a second, it charged with Hal into the line of spears from the side.

“Impossible!” The captain spat, as he saw the black tiger move in a way completely unthinkable for horses.

“Tear them apart, Miou!” Hal said.

The ferocious fangs of the black tiger sunk into the shoulders of a soldier, causing

blood to gush forth and screams to sound, then Hal spun his spear atop his beloved steed, and swept away the soldiers with a swing. After which, the rest of the goblins came to tear the humans to scraps.

Hal rode onwards with the three goblins, as they made their way for the escaping carriage.

“We’ll overtake it and crush the legs of that four-legged beast!”

Hal led the three goblins to overtake the carriage, but when they were about to attack—

“Tch!?”

A throwing knife came flying from the driver’s seat, passing by Hal’s face. It had enough power behind it, so it wasn’t something he could just ignore. More knives came flying his way, and Hal deflected them with his spear, but gradually, he started to slow.

“Now, hit its legs!” Hal ordered as he dodged the knives.

The three goblins were about to thrust their spears when—

^{Barbatos}
“Ravaging storm!”

That was nothing more than a solemn voice, but that was none other than Gulland. He swung his great sword that he wielded atop his shoulder, and the storm that gathered followed the path of the sword, shooting forth toward the Paradua riders.



The distant sound of weapons clashing and a bellowing howl touched upon his memory to recall something crucial. Upon opening his eyes, Gi Ga Rax looked around him.

“Gu—, are you alright?” Caressing Hakuou’s back, he called out to the other sleeping goblins. There were some among them who could no longer move, but there were none among those who could that were not injured.

Even Gi Ga himself was injured. There was a wound on his shoulder, and another on his side, none of which were shallow.

“Listen... Do you hear that? It’s the king calling out to us. The king has returned,” Gi Ga said, jubilation filling him.

The goblins looked at each other, then they too sharpened their ears.

Before long, they nodded and turned to Gi Ga.

It was as if they knew what Gi Ga was going to say.

“We may be wounded, but we are warriors of the king. A shameful display is forbidden before the king, so... Stand! Fellow warriors!”

At Gi Ga’s words, the goblins stood. Some had broken legs, some had broken arms... Not one of them was unhurt, but they stood all the same, and held themselves up with a sword or spear.

They had fought to let the females and the young of the goblins to escape, but though they were able to push the humans for some time, gradually, the humans’ greater number pushed them back, and they had no choice but to disperse. Gi Ga fought his hardest to protect the goblins, and when it became apparent that the humans stopped, they gathered together and slept.

“Do you hear his voice? Our king is fighting! He fights! So, stand! Fellow warriors! For to us, there is no glory greater than to die for the king!”

Dragging his body, Gi Ga mounted himself over Hakuou’s back, and the goblins followed.

“We are chosen! We are hard! We are warriors of the king!” Gi Ga said. “So, let us go, fellow warriors.”

Fire burned in the eyes of the king’s warriors as they joined the fray once more.

“To battle!”

CHAPTER 84

INTERSECTING

“...It’s coming.”

Gowen closed his eyes and listened closely to the sound of battle. When he heard the thickets being pushed through, his eyes suddenly opened.

“GURUuRUuOOOAa!”

What appeared before him was a goblin as big as an orc. It bellowed a ferocious howl as it swung its great sword. For a moment, Gowen couldn’t help but be wide-eyed upon seeing the monster. But it was only for a moment, as he immediately reacted and rolled on the ground to dodge the attack. If not for his assiduousness in his training, he would not have immediately reacted and pulled out his long sword to narrowly dodge that attack.

The blade grazed past his side, but such a wound was a long way from being fatal.

The goblin’s pair of crimson eyes, redder than the red of blood itself, looked at him.

“So you’re the boss of the humans.” The monster said.

Its voice was heavy, almost as if the very winds of the abyss carried it, but Gowen had already regained his calm.

“I take it you’re the monster that can think then,” Gowen said back.

As Gowen picked himself up, he brandished his long sword.

“Surrender, and the killing will stop,” the monster said.

With the sword wielded high up above its head, the goblin appeared twice his size, yet Gowen did not cower. He wielded his sword pointed to the ground as he assumed a defensive stance.

“The same is true if you die.”

Gowen’s job was to keep this goblin or whatever exactly it was from moving any further. Gulland might be guarding the saint, but that was no guarantee that the saint would be able to safely leave the forest.

As Gowen looked at the monster before him, he wondered. Are there any more monsters like this?

The goblin before him was just too different from the others. The most common type they’ve fought was of course the normal goblins, followed by the rare variant, which numbered three, and then the noble variant, which so far there’s only been one of. That was a considerable army for some horde of goblins around these parts of the forest.

But then... considering how a goblin such as this could appear before him... was it really reasonable to assume that that’s all there was to the goblins’ forces?

“...This was unexpected.”

While they were yet to actually cross swords, if a goblin like this – a lord class perhaps – frequented these parts of the forest, then developing the forest any further now would prove to be problematic.

The right course of action would be to leave the forest as soon as possible, preserving as much of his forces as he could, then slowly whittling down the monsters of the forest from the edge of the forest. But in order to do so—

“What’s the matter? Why aren’t you coming?”

He would first have to defeat the imposing foe in front of him.



The man before me seems to be the boss of the humans. His relaxed stance showed no openings. And though I hold my sword above my head, appearing as threatening as one could be, the man stood unwavering, even talking back to me calmly.

Even though he looks like a butler with that combed down silver hair of his and that

mustache, the feeling I get from him is undoubtedly that of a powerful warrior.

“If you won’t surrender, then—”

If he thinks he can stop my blow, he is horribly mistaken. Come! Feel the weight of my sword!

But while I filled my muscles to the brim with power as I lifted my sword, eager to bury my blade into the man before me, the shouts behind me kept me from making my move. My subordinates are probably fighting there.

I don’t know which one, but it’s either the beast-rider horde I sent ahead led by Gi Gi and Hal or the survivors of the village. Either one is bad.

What do I do?

Do I try and kill the man in front of me now? Or do I help them first?

The beast-rider horde have few goblins in their horde, while the survivors of the village are bound to have suffered heavy casualties.

...I’ve decided.

My goal is to take back what’s mine. I have a lot to pay the humans back for, but I don’t want to lose any more of my men.

I’m probably still too far from this man’s range. Moreover, he’s not coming. That’s good.

Immediately, I turned around and bolted off, sweeping away the humans that blocked my way.

—Please make it in time. I don’t want to lose any more than this!”

The humans jeered as I ran away.

Then in no time at all, thanks to my strengthened muscles, I was there at the battlefield where my subordinates fought.

“King!” Gi Gi ran up to me as soon as he saw me.

Battling against these foot soldiers with these numbers must have been a challenge.

Gi Gi was dyed in red and a thick steam could be seen rising from his whole body as he approached me. He looked reliable.

“Are you alright!? What about Hal!?” I urgently asked.

“He went ahead to recover the king’s treasure,” Gi Gi replied.

Without intending to, I grit my teeth when I heard those words.

“Where!?” I asked.

“Up ahead... Just leave this place to us, King,” Gi Gi said.

“I leave it to you then!”

We both know it’s dangerous, but still... Reshia is near! If I stretch my hands just a little further, I can reach her!

Sorry... Just hold on tight, goblins. I will save her and get back to you as soon as I can!

“As you will,” Gi Gi said.

“You are to hold this area, Warriors of Paradua! Endure just a little bit more! Muster your courage and fight!” I bellowed out to the warriors before I left.

Then I ran... I ran so fast it seemed like all my earlier movements so far were a joke.

“RESHIAaAa!!”

I ran through the blood stained road as I called out her name.

Will it reach her?

Wait for me, Reshia. Wait for me just a little bit more.

I don't care if this is destiny or fate! Whatever it is I will tear it apart!



"Ugh... What a disaster."

Hal held his spear tight as he looked down on the three goblins of Paradua, laying lifelessly on the ground. His poor judgment had cost them their lives.

But he didn't have the time to regret. He was already chasing that four-legged thing that was tugging along that carriage. It didn't matter that the previous attack was as strong as Rashka's, that carriage needed to be stopped, and there was no other way to do so but to chase it.

"The first of Paradua's Spear enters!" Hal announced his entrance to encourage himself as he passed by the horses.

He was right at the heel of the target. That earlier attack was strong, but Hal figured that an attack like that couldn't possibly be used right next to the carriage. The humans wouldn't possibly let themselves get caught in their own attack.

Hal was further convinced of his hypothesis when no attack came when he neared the carriage.

"I will— What!?"

But just when he was about to strike down the horses, a short dagger came flying at him, burying itself into his shoulder. When he looked up to the front seat of the carriage, he saw a small human wielding a dagger, around which was the bridle of the horses fastened.

"Sorry," the human said.

"NUuuAAaa!" Hal screamed.

Dagger after dagger buried into Hal and his beloved steed, Miou, forcing them off the humans' trail.

Hal was a chieftain, however, and the moment he realized his spear wouldn't reach the

horses, he threw it. He did not have the luxury of taking the time to aim, but his spear still managed to graze one of the horse's leg before it buried into the ground, slowing down the carriage.

"Tch... Darn."

Mill took the bridle again after ensuring the coast was clear.

"The horse is injured," she yelled to Gulland, "we need to change horses or the horse will die!"

"...Don't stop! Keep going!" Gulland said back.

He was sitting at the roof of the carriage, allowing him to see much more than Mill could. Gulland's lips twisted into a fierce smile.

"Cavalry up ahead. They're here to welcome us," Gulland said.

Mill heaved a sigh of relief when she saw the heavily armed cavalry approaching.

—We're saved.

But then why weren't they stopping?

There were at least 30 in the approaching cavalry. It was not the main force yet, but it was one of the strongest forces from the western fief.

But while she was wondering, Gulland suddenly laughed. "It's here! Ha ha ha! The big one is here!"

Reflected on Gulland's eyes was the king of goblins chasing after them.



The carriage is up ahead.

—I've caught up!!

Iron Second brimmed with ether as I eyed the cavalry passing by the carriage.

Enchant
“Turn me into a blade!”

The human cavalry stirred up clouds of dust as they ran at me.

When our distances zeroed, and our paths crossed—

“Screw off!”

The first battle was with the vanguard. The human struck out his lance, but it only passed by the side of my face, as I struck back in turn. With my great sword clad in ether, I tore through the human like a piece of paper.

—Don’t stop!

A second and third lance came right after the first. In response, I invoked my ether.

Accel
“My body is like a cloud of dust”

Using my great sword as a shield, I invoked Accel to pass through the cavalry in one go, brushing aside the horses I touched before quickly stopping in front of the knight before me.

“GURUuuuO000!”

Ignoring the recoil, I swung my great sword from below to blow away the horse along with its rider before invoking Accel again.

“Turn around! Don’t let it reach the carriage! Protect the saint with your honor on the line!” One of the knights said.

And from that I knew.

Reshia is here!

I wrung out every bit of strength I had as I kicked off the ground and filled my legs with ether.

That explosive sensation pushed me into what felt like a wall of air.

But even as that wall pushed against me, I channeled Accel even harder.

It was hard to breathe while being pressured by that wall, but in no time at all, I managed to shorten the distance to the carriage.

But still... I can hear the horses' hooves kicking against the ground as they neared me. Breaking through with the temporary speed boosts from Accel was indeed not an easy task.

The longer this battle goes on with these horses on my trail, the worse off I'll be.

They're nearing me! Looks like they've also brought their best!

"DieeEee!"

I swung my sword behind me in a desperate attempt to defend.

"King!"

"Gi Ga!?"

But then Gi Ga suddenly jumped out of nowhere, riding on the back of a beast-rider, to keep the knights from approaching any further.

"Kill the king's enemies! Don't let even a single one pass!" Gi Ga said.

More goblins appeared as he said that. Not one of them was uninjured, but they grit their teeth and blocked the approaching knights all the same.

"Breakthrough!!" Yelled one of the knights. "Kill the big one!"

I'm... I'm... I'm going!! Gi Ga!

"Watch my back!"

Don't die... I found myself wanting to say, but I kept those words from coming out.

After seeing Gi Da's death, I know that it's exactly by putting one's life on the line that one can fight hard.

But still... I hope they survive.

Losing loyal retainers is a great loss for me.

Keeping one's warriors alive is needed for a king to realize the path of conquest.

Which is why I will only chase this carriage up till the brink of the humans' territory. After that I'll have no choice but to retreat. I can't just stand idle while my subordinates die one after another in the forest.

Saving Reshia is nothing more than my selfishness.

But despite that, my subordinates are willing to put their lives on the line.

As I thought that, I filled my legs with ether.

“NUUuuOOOAoAAa!”

I filled them with so much ether it felt like they would explode.

I lost my arm during the battle with the ogre lord trying to do two things at the same time with my ether, but after evolving, I should be able to do it now.

Cracks appeared on the level ground. My whole body was supported by my left leg as my right lifted. Ether exploded behind my right leg, pushing me forward.

A wall of air greeted me once more, as I lifted my left leg and my right descended to support me.

With Accel and my ether-reinforced muscles working together, I moved at a speed unknown to those on horse. And in the blink of an eye, I was nearer than ever.

—Just a bit more!

Running as fast as I could that even my breathing stopped, I was finally right behind the carriage. I just needed a little bit more and my hands would reach her.

But the heavens were cruel, and it was at such a time that a man appeared to call upon a storm.

“Ruler of Wind and Lightning!”^{Astaroth}

Suddenly, wind and lightning filled my vision



Level has risen.

1 -> 3

GOSSIP

AN ORDINARY DAY IN THE TRIBES

Status	
Name	Kuzan
Race	Gordob Goblin
Level	50
Class	King; Ruler
Possessed Skills	Kairaishi; Prophecy Death
Divine Protection	Goddess of the Underworld (Altesia)
Attributes	Darkness; Death
Abnormal Status	Protection of the Twin-Headed Snake

Kuzan, the priestess of the Gordob, tasked by the king to take care of the fortress in his absence, was currently sweeping the fortress grounds.

It was a holy place, after all, and as the person responsible, she could not allow it to remain messy.

“Good day,” the oldest of the chiefs, Aluahliha said.

He was no longer a chieftain himself, but he was still a warrior; his duty was also to protect the fortress.

Normally, leaving behind a chief would have been enough to defend the fortress, but Kuzan was not a fighter, so the king decided to leave the old Aluhaliha behind.

“Greetings, Grandpa Aluhaliha,” Kuzan said with a smile.

That was the first time Aluhaliha saw the ever serious priestess of Gordob smile. And to him it was truly a dazzling sight.

She’d been holed up all this time, so he thought for sure she’d never smile from the bottom of her heart, yet here she was smiling cheerfully like the young girl she was as

she swept the floor.

The old chief couldn't help but let his face slacken upon seeing that, but when he realized what he was doing, he quickly knitted his brows. He didn't want to lose his tough appearance.

"You've been dropping by frequently lately," Kuzan said.

"I just felt like it... I brought some meat, by the way. Why don't you go eat with the others," Aluhaliha said as he handed the meat of the spear deer he got along the way. Interestingly enough, the part of the meat he handed was the most nutritional part: the liver.

"Grandpa, thank you!" Kuzan said as she happily accepted the meat.

Aluhaliha thought meat would be rare for the Gordob, as they were a tribe known to stay within their caves. Seeing Kuzan so excitedly accept the meat he brought proved his conjecture true, and his face once again slackened.

"Everyone! Grandpa Aluhaliha brought us meat! Let's eat first!" Aluhaliha happily watched as Kuzan ran to the others and called out to them.

"Who would've thought she'd have a side like this to her," Aluhaliha muttered.

Then suddenly another voice resounded.

"Who would've thought, indeed," the voice said.

Aluhaliha jumped at the voice; he seemed paler than if he'd seen a ghost. When he turned around, he saw that it was Yellow. The small-bodied Yellow, who was both Kuzan's father and her aide in leading their tribe. For some reason, however, the small goblin's gaze toward Aluhaliha was unusually cold.

Any other day Aluhaliha would've been sure he could easily win against Yellow in a fight, but for some reason, he actually winced at the small goblin's gaze. It was something he found confusing despite his long years in the hunt.

"...Yellow, it's you." Aluhaliha said, trying to make his voice as dignified as could be.

But Yellow's gaze only grew colder.

"Yes, it's me, Yellow, Kuzan's only blood-related father," Yellow said.

Aluhaliha couldn't understand why Yellow would bother bringing up Kuzan's name, but he also couldn't help wince once more when he did.

"Can I help you with something?" He asked.

"No, you seemed free, so I called out," Yellow matter-of-factly replied.

There was a coldness in his voice that intimidated the old chieftain warrior.

"I'm not actually that free, I'm just..." Aluhaliha stammered.

"Oh?" Yellow said.

It was but a single word, yet that single word emanated a strange pressure that seemed to make the small goblin bigger.

Aluhaliha blinked his eyes, unable to believe what he was seeing.

"Lord Aluhaliha, as the oldest of the Paradua tribe, and the most valiant warrior in the previous battle, and! —"

Yellow seemed to be praising him, but that sudden increase in volume made Aluhaliha draw cold sweat.

"—As the oldest chief among the four tribes, the goblin with the greatest influence even when compared to the Gaidga or Ganra, would you mind if I ask your opinion regarding a certain... matter?"

Sounded more like a threat than a question, Aluhaliha thought.

"S-Sure..." Aluhaliha found himself meekly saying.

He was long past the point where he could yet regain his dignity.

"What do you think of an old goblin, who happens to hold illicit feelings for a very, and

if I may emphasize, very young girl; going as far as to use his authority to reach out to this pure maiden in hopes of satiating his own selfish desires... What does the great Aluhaliha think if such a dirty and corrupted and vile goblin were to be among the ranks of our four tribes?" Yellow asked.

It didn't really seem like he was asking his opinion though, Aluhaliha thought, In fact, it pretty much felt like he was pushing his own opinion onto him, but regardless, the most Aluhaliha could do was to nod his head in agreement.

"R-Right... Such a goblin certainly deserves to be punished."

"You think so too, Master Aluhaliha? As expected of someone with such grand caliber."

Aluhaliha was taken aback by Yellow's theatrics, and the devilish smile he saw on Yellow's lips sent shivers down his back. It was a kind of fear he had never felt despite his long years as chieftain. A fear that sent his eyes darting the moment Yellow placed his hands over his shoulders.

"I hope you do not – ever – forget those words," Yellow said in a hushed voice, but there was a fire hidden behind them that made Aluhaliha nod despite not truly understanding.

And then Yellow walked away.

"Good grief..." Aluhaliha said, seemingly exahusted, "I think I'll go take care of the black tiger cubs when I get back."

Then a happy voice called out to him.

"You have black tiger cubs at home!?" The voice said, obviously belonging to Kuzan, as Aluhaliha confirmed upon turning around.

"Y-Yes... They were born just a few days ago. They're very important treasures to our tribe," he said.

"Wow, that's amazing. Can I see them?"

"Sure, drop by anytime. They can't walk yet, but they've already grown their fur. I say this is when they're the cutest."

“Yay! Oh, but... I can’t walk very fast.”

Kuzan was crestfallen when she realized meeting the cubs wouldn’t be possible, but Aluhaliha quickly brought her spirits up by offering her a ride on his own riderbeast.

“Why don’t you ride with me then?” He suggested. “If you come with me, we can make it in less than half a day.”

“Really!? You’re the best, Gramps!” Kuzan said as she hugged the old chieftain, at which he smiled and said that it was good to go out from time to time.

A happy atmosphere seemed to emanate from the two, but contrast to them, there was currently a cold gaze freezing from behind a pillar.

Dark ether emanated from Yellow as he watched the two embrace. That aura was so terrifying it sent the Gordob goblins that passed by running and screaming.

INTERMISSION

A FORGED STRENGTH

Status	
Name	Gi Go Amatsuki
Race	Goblin
Level	65
Class	Noble; Subleader
Possessed Skills	Sword Mastery B-; Self-Made Man; Veteran; Chivalry; Warrior's Soul
Divine Protection	La Paruza Sword God
Attributes	N/A

Self-Made Man – The requirements for evolution is greater, but the resulting boon after evolution is also greater.

Veteran – Critical rate is increased against opponents of lower class, while defense is increased against those of a higher class.

Chivalry – Charm is increased against all races. (LOW)

Warrior's Soul – During one on one battles stamina is increased and skills have higher chance of occurring.

“Too fast.”

When Gowen realized that chasing the goblin wouldn't be happening, he looked around him instead. The rummage left by the chaos that goblin spread was worst than he'd expected. Everything in its path was mowed down altogether without question. The sight made even him start wondering. Should he keep on fighting? Or should they retreat?

Who would've thought such a thing would be lurking right next to his territory, Gowen

thought when a soldier approached him.

"I bring word from the scouts to the west, Lord," the soldier said.

"Speak," Gowen urged the soldier to speak without any hesitation.

"A horde of goblins approaches from the west; their number: approximately 100 goblins."

"...Is this the same horde we previously defeated?"

"No, Lord. Their numbers include many unfamiliar types. The scouts believe it to be a different horde."

"Perhaps, it's their main force."

Stroking his mustache once, Gowen closed his eyes and knitted his brows, then almost immediately after, he gave a command.

"Have the soldiers retreat from the village. Yuan will lead."

"As you command!"

"I will watch the back. Now, hurry! This is a battle of time!"

At Gowen's behest, the soldier quickly stood up and left with the other messengers to bring word to all their forces.

"Yo, Mr. Iron-Armed Knight. You seem really busy," a familiar voice unreservedly said. The voice itself seemed enthralled, while the eyes of its master looked mad as they darted to and fro the surroundings in search for prey. The sword in his hand, Fifi, trickled with blood even as the man held it still.

"I came across some gobs and orcs along the way; I think I took out 20 of them myself. Ahh, I just can't get enough of killing! ...So did I make myself useful, hmm, Iron-Armed Knight?" Gene said.

"While I won't reprimand you for your odd... disposition, there's not really much to praise in killing a bunch of small fries... regardless how many," Gowen provokingly

said.

Gene smiled when he heard that. Such provocation sounded almost like a plea to die to his ears. And naturally, he was neither the type to refuse nor ignore such a plea.

“Ho...”

“And so, I believe I have a job more... suitable for your skills.”

“You have a tastier prey for me?”

‘A prey tastier than you’ is precisely what those words implied.

“A goblin above a lord class,” Gowen nodded.

“Hmm... And on what basis do you say this goblin is greater than a lord?”

Hera, the goddess of wisdom’s, light seemed to return to Gene’s entranced eyes upon hearing Gowen’s words. A goblin greater than a lord should not exist, that was common sense. Yet if it did exist, it would be an existence straight out of the legends. Perhaps it might not compare to someone like the veteran, Gowen, or the holy knight adventurer, Gulland, but to Gene, who truly loved the hunt, such a monster was more than enough to rouse his interest.

“It was colossal even compared to all the goblin lords I’ve seen. Moreover, the seal of the Goddess of the ^{Evil God} Underworld was on its right arm, while in its left hand was an orb I’d never seen before.”

“In other words... A goblin king?”

They knew of the orc king’s existence since its appearance some decades ago, but a goblin king was unheard of.

“Perhaps... But even without it, the food chain in this place is just too strange. The orcs are weak, while the goblins reign strong... Something like that is unheard of.”

Gene became thoughtful at Gowen’s words before his face broke out into a huge grin.

“Well, alright. Let’s just say I believe this fairytale monster of yours. So, where is it?”

“Up ahead. It should be chasing after the saint.”

“Seriously? Darn... What a pain,” Gene said, seemingly complaining, but there was a calmness to him that spoke otherwise.

“Well, I’m off then. It’s time for the Lightning-Fast Knight to make his entrance!” Gene said, his eyes once again entranced.

“I suppose,” Gowen said.

“I bring grave news, Lord! The fourth platoon has fallen to the goblins! Casualties are rising! And the soldiers are requesting reinforcements!” A messenger said.

Gene smiled when he heard that report.

“Do watch my back, Iron-Armed Knight,” Gene laughed loudly as he pulled Selena’s hair. “Open a path that will bring me to the end of this road!”

The elven maiden appeared haggard, but she opened the path all the same. She was clearly spent well beyond her means, but Gene had forcefully fed her the blood of a demihuman to increase her strength.

In fact, the elven road wasn’t actually something that could be opened at will. It was only thanks to the demihuman’s blood that she could do what she was doing now. As for what side effects awaited her, not even she herself knew.

Unfortunately, the collar around her neck made it impossible to revolt, so she had no other choice but to pray and open the path. As she did, the nearby vines gathered into the shape of a gate.

“See ya,” Gene smugly said as he stepped through the gate.

“Hmm... Luck seems to be blowing my way,” Gowen muttered.

If so... He brandished his sword.

“Yuan, I give you temporary command of the army. I will go support our men.”

The Iron-Armed Knight made his move.



After receiving directions from the old goblin, Gi Gu Verbena mercilessly led the horde against the humans.

“Don’t let even a single one of these human scum go!”

Gi Gu howled in his fury as he called death upon the humans.

“Slaughter them!”

With Gi Zu, Gi Do, and the rest of the rare class goblins in tow, they cut down the humans as soon as they saw them.

Gi Gu Verbena swung his axe with the ferocity and power of a noble class. The humans wore armor made of iron, but it mattered little, as the contents were flesh all the same. When Gi Gu’s axe descended on one of the humans, the iron helmet bent under the terrifying prowess of his axe, crushing the human head contained within.

“Goblins! And there’s a lot of them!” The soldiers screamed as the goblins slaughtered and surrounded them.

The humans may have made camp in the flatlands, but they were still within the forest, and the forest was home to the goblins.

To make things worse, the humans had their guard down after previously winning against the goblins and seeing the king move by himself. They thought the war was over. Never did they expect that the previous battles were merely an overture to the true battle at hand.

And so, when Gi Gu Verbena led his goblins to battle, it did not take long for the battlefield to turn into a pool of human blood.

The goblins originally had the advantage in strength, so when they fought with wisdom, the humans fell back. And in no time at all, they were driven into a predicament.

“Hide behind the wagons! Call for reinforcements!”

Fortunately or unfortunately depending from which perspective one looked, the Herculean Wyatt, who ran because of the king, had ended up here.

He took the panicking humans and ordered them create a barricade from the wagons’ cargo.

“Calm yourselves, men! Hide behind the barricade and wait for the goblins to approach. When they near you, thrust out your spears!”

^{Air Slash}
“The wind sings!”

The wind mage, Gi Do, casted his spell, but—

^{Guardian,}
“Vajra!”

Wyatt managed to block it with his skill and the shield of a fallen soldier.

But compared to Wyatt the real headache was the white Hand of Life, who healed everyone at the center of the camp. Because of her the soldiers kept coming back to battle until they were killed.

In contrast, the goblins had to fall back the moment they were injured. It was not a battle Gi Gu Verbena could prevail in easily even with his high leadership skills.

Yet hope had not been snuffed out for the goblins. In fact, Gi Gu Verbena had actually been fighting leisurely all this time, and for good reason: he was waiting for the other hordes to come.

Rashka of Gaidga, with his great strength, Gilmi and Narsa of Ganra, who could fight from the distance.

The moment their tribes arrive, the whole battlefield would be turned upside down.

There was no reason to push themselves, but there was no reason to idle either, so Gi Gu strove to battle the humans while minimizing their losses.

As Gi Gu Verbena formulated a plan by himself, the goblin encirclement around the humans gradually grew tighter.



Whereas Gi Gu Verbena chose to attack the nearby humans, Gi Go Amatuski decided to take the wide-eyed Gi Jii, the stealthy Gi Ji, and a paltry force of goblins to quickly reach the village.

The humans were detestable, yes, but to Gi Go, the fact that the king had gone ahead was of greater importance.

“We must hurry to the king,” he said.

Most of the normal goblins from the Gi Village went with Gi Gu Verbena, while Gi Go took a paltry force with him to hurry to the king.

Gi Go did not want to follow another noble class like himself, so instead, he decided to leave most of the forces to a friend who could lead well.

Gi Gu accepted his proposal, and he told the wide-eyed Gi Jii to go with him along with the others as a farewell gift.

“Enemy, ahead, 15...” Gi Ji said.

Gi Ji would take advantage of his specialty in covert ops to scout ahead, allowing the small horde to quickly kill off the enemies in their path.

“Those who block the way, only have one fate: to be cut!”

Quickly unsheathing his curved sword, Gi Go Amatsuki ran up to the unsuspecting humans and attacked them. The whispers of the Sword God allowed Gi Go’s swordplay to shine.

The humans wore armor all over their body, but there were still gaps here and there. Such a thing was necessary so as to not impede their sight or movement. Which also goes to say that the parts near their joints were particularly undefended. And it was exactly those small gaps that Gi Go took advantage of.

As his curved sword swung, it went straight for the dominant elbow, cleanly lopping off the arm of the enemy. The human screamed at the pain of losing his arm, but by then, Gi Go's sword had already pierced his eyes, bringing him the peace of death.

The soldiers nearby quickly struck out their sword and spear, but Gi Go allowed his body to fall to dodge them. At the same time, he struck out his sword to cut at the back of their knees, causing the soldiers to fall to the ground. But before they could ever hope to reach it, their heads were already severed from their body.

Blood rained as the humans fell down, and as the ground dyed with red, the whispers of the Sword God grew ever stronger.

—More... More, more! More! More! I want a strong foe to cut! I want to cut someone strong! I want to reach the heavens with my sword!

Those thoughts grew stronger every passing day. And every time he cut someone down, the thirst grew stronger.

—Isn't there anyone strong? A strong foe like... like... like the king.

Gi Go's hair stood on end when he imagined himself fighting the king. He immediately shook his head as if to force away those thoughts.

The king was an existence he should serve; he was not someone he should fight, nor yearn to fight.

"Not bad."

The sound of that low voice awoke Gi Go from the Sword God's whispers. When he turned around, what greeted him was a silver-haired man with a mustache calmly walking toward him. The human looked older than those he'd fought, yet the aura he felt emanating from him was far graver than any he had come across yet.

"What is your name?" Gi Go asked.

The man's brows slightly raised up when he heard Gi Go's question. Apparently, he did not expect such a request.

“Gowen Ranid, a holy knight,” the man introduced himself.

“Gi Go Amatsuki,” Gi Go said back in courtesy.

After greeting each other, the two warriors brandished their weapons as they closed in on each other.

“Lord Gi Go,” Gi Jii called out as he attempted to surround the human along with Gi Ji and Gi Go.

“This is a one on one duel. Do not interfere,” Gi Go said, but his eyes did not leave Gowen for even a moment.

Then Gi Go bolted for the man.

As Gowen held his long sword with one hand and took on a lower stance, Gi Go wielded his curved sword between his armpits to hide it. One took on a stance to receive any blow, while the other took on a stance to make a quick attack.

Gowen came here to help his men, so it was only natural that he would be thinking of the battles to come. It was because of that that he decided to use a defensive stance; he could not allow himself to be injured. And with the iron armor to protect him, he was certain that the enemy before him would aim for its weak points.

Their bout lasted only for an instant. When Gi Go’s curved sword flashed from the left, Gowen’s long sword reached for the goblin’s throat... but that was exactly what Gi Go was aiming for.

“Die!”

Suddenly, Gi Go stopped his body from moving to the left, dodging the oncoming sword by a hair’s breadth, to then launch another attack toward the enemy’s side. A normal human would surely bring back his sword to protect himself, allowing Gi Go to finish him off, but...

What happened next was something Gi Go could never have expected. The enemy took back his sword quicker than Gi Go could charge, brushing off Gi Go’s attack, and cutting at his legs in a straight line from left to right before finally finishing the flurry of attacks with a thrust to his shoulder. As the man took back his sword, Gi Go fell to the ground.

The speed of their swords were too different. But unlike Gene, this was not a power the man borrowed from his weapon, but a power he gained after arduously training day after day. A skill known as Martial Barrier, a skill he earned from sheer hard work.

“Lord Gi Go!?” Gi Jii cried out as he stood with Gi Ji to block the man. With two goblins, two of which were rare, their power surely wasn’t weak, yet...

“Stop it! You can’t win against him!” Gi Go told them to stop.

But it was not possible to retreat. In the next instant, Gi Jii and Gi Ji bolted for the enemy. They attacked from both sides; Gi Ji took the enemy’s attention, while Gi Jii attacked. It was a combination attack taking advantage of the two skills: Meld and Cooperation; and yet Gowen destroyed them without even breaking a sweat.

Gi Ji’s blow was repelled with a single blow, while Gi Jii’s attack was stopped by the enemy’s iron arm. After which, the sword that sent Gi Ji flying was used to cut Gi Jii’s legs before piercing his shoulder in the same manner Gi Go was injured.

“Bastard!”

Gi Ji ran at the man once more, but he was beaten in the exact same manner as Gi Jii. By this time the normal goblins had frozen up in fear. They knew full well how strong goblin rares were, and yet here was a man who could treat even a noble like a child.

“Ku...”

Gi Go forced himself to stand and fight.

—Just one blow!

Gi Go jumped with his sword to slash at the man, but in return, the only thing he got was a line from his cheeks to his brows that dyed his vision in red.

“That’s enough...”

After seeing Gi Go’s paltry group fall, Gowen no longer fought and instead walked again toward the people he meant to aid. But as he walked, the soldiers who came with him asked.

“Should we finish them?” One soldier asked.

Gowen shook his head. “I intentionally left them alive. Leave them alone.”

“But...” The soldier did not seem convinced.

“Do you not understand why I left them alive?” Gowen asked.

“Apologies, Lord.”

“They are not normal monsters. The goblin that leads them is able to think. If so, then that peculiarity should have an effect to the rest of its horde... Since the goblins I left alive can no longer move, isn’t it only normal that someone would carry them?”

When the soldier heard his answer he shook, and again he remembered that the seemingly ‘old man’ in front of him was a veteran who has walked through countless battlefields.

He intentionally left the goblins alive, even going as far as to specifically hinder their ability to walk, to force their brethren to save them, effectively reducing their numbers, and thus, allowing them the leisure to withdraw their army.

Gulland might be stronger, and Gene might be crazier, but when it came to the battlefield, no one knew better than the Iron-Armed Knight himself.

Gowen Ranid

“Understood,” the soldier finally said after being enlightened.

The soldiers shivered as they followed the holy knight.

CHAPTER 85

HER HAND

Lightning flashed before me.

“Turn me into a blade!”
Enchant

I tried to brush away the lightning with Iron Second, but the moment my black-flame clad sword hit it, a piercing heat penetrated me.

Breathing became difficult under its terrifying pressure, and I couldn't help but look down for a moment as I grit my teeth.

“...Gu!”

I kept myself from crying out because of the pain as I looked ahead. I can't stop, I thought, not now. If I stopped even a moment, that armored carriage would surely leave me in the dust. I knew that despite all the blood rushing to my head, and so I forced my staggering feet to chase after it, glaring up the man on the carriage's roof as I did; that imposing figure of his with his sword pointed to the heavens looked just like an adherent of the Lightning God.

“Something... like this... Something like this!”

I don't care if he's a messenger of the gods, a hero blessed by the Third Daughter Liuryuna Who Rules O, if he stands in my way, I will crush him! If he thinks this little lightning can stop me, he is wrong! And he will pay for that blunder!

My legs brimmed with ether as I moved along the ground, carrying with them the strength to crack a fissure across the very land I ran upon; the Blessing of the One-Eyed Snake has made the ether that much easier to control.

I set my sights upon the armored carriage. 10 steps... That's enough. I'll kill Reshia's abductor too. Watch me!

“GURUuu OAOA OoOoo!”



“Heh, what a tough cookie. I guess that’s par for the course for a monster though.”

Gulland’s senses tingled as he watched the monster approach. They screamed of the threat this monster posed, and he would be a fool to believe otherwise. After all, this very sense that was screaming at him now was something all first-class adventurers had; a sort of sixth-sense they relied upon to ensure their survival. Those who did not have it would not live long. In a sense, it was a skill that could only be learned by risking one’s life.

That sixth-sense was screaming at him right now of how dangerous this monster was.

It was not such that he could absolutely not win against it, but he would certainly not be getting off scot-free if he fought it. That great sword over its shoulder was clad in the black flames of the Goddess of Vengeance, who^{Altesia}.” The resulting power when combined with that colossal body could only be imagined. Close combat was definitely out of the question.

Muscles developed far beyond any human’s, arms a size bigger than his, and judging from how it was catching up to the carriage, a speed more than enough to excel in battle.

But if that’s the case, then... he would just simply not engage the monster in close combat.

To begin with, adventurers hunted monsters as a party. Of course, there were eccentrics who hunted alone, but the natural strength advantage of monsters made fighting as a group much more preferable. The strategy was often the same: they would attack as a group to slowly whittle down the monster while conserving their strength.

It was because of that that Gulland had none of the purity of a knight. Instead, what he had was the ability to make the most out of every situation.

“Ruler of Wind^{Astaroth} and Lightning!!!”

One of the unique skills the Great Sword of Blue Thunder possessed, Astaroth, shot out toward the enemy.

That flash of lightning split into three streaks. before turning into a whip of lightning that lashed at the approaching monster. Any human would turn into cinders before that attack that covered the whole road, yet the monster slipped past it.

“Kuhahaha! Not bad!!”

It was a reckless move, but the monster managed to make it happen, yet Gulland only laughed as a predatory smile appeared upon his lips.

“How about this then! ^{Barbatos} Ravaging Storm!”

Gulland swept with his sword and a blade of wind shot out from the whirling air. It was the same skill that took out Hal’s subordinates.

“Turn me into a blade!” ^{Enchant}

Like the very magmas that burned at the bottom of the abyss, the monster’s voice resounded, chanting. At the end of which, the black flames clad upon its great sword doubled. And when it swung down that black-burning sword, it cut the blade of wind into two.

“Great! This’ll make killing you all the more worth it!”

A voice howled within Gulland. Kill the monster! It said. Gulland did not try to oppose that voice; when he opened his eyes, the lips of his mouth split far apart to form a huge grin..

“I’ll kill you, Monster! I’ll fucking kill you!!”

Gulland laughed as he raised up his sword around which the storms gathered, invoking Frenzied Sword, the same skill that buried Gi Zo. The ancient grade sword in which was sealed a spirit sucked up the mana he fed it. Beads of sweat gathered at his brows as the wind howled.

Gulland swayed atop the carriage as it ran at full speed. Keeping his sword raised up with one hand, he held onto the roof with his other hand to keep himself from falling.

^{Zu All Do Ishtal Zein Badion}
“Devour, o God of Lightning. Li”

Gulland spoke in the language of the spirits, and lightning began to crackle with the great sword that had converged with the storm.

“Die, Monster!”

The maddened lightning whirled into a whirlpool as it shot forth toward the monster, but as soon as it did, Gulland clicked his tongue.

“I’ll be taking this, Mr. Storm Knight!”

Long hair that fluttered in the wind, a light armor so dyed in blood that it had turned dark-red, and a pair of eyes upon which reflected ecstasy. The timing of the holy knight, Gene Marlon, also known as the lightning-fast knight was just too good, prompting the Storm Knight to click his tongue.

The attack Gulland sent just now was canceled out by the monster, but it couldn’t get off scot-free. A huge wound opened over its shoulders from which blood spurted out. Any human would have died from such wounds, but the monster showed no signs of stopping.

“Tch, just when it was getting interesting!” Gulland spat.

“GURUuuoooOOOAaa!”

Blood spurted out from the monster’s wounds as it howled in its anger, but despite that, it kept up the chase.

Gene followed behind it, obviously with the intention to attack from behind.

“What a horrible guy... Even though he’s supposed to be a knight.” Gulland spat as he watched the two.

It wasn’t long until the exit. Soon they would reach the point where Gowen’s regular

army was waiting.



Lili turned to Reshia when she heard the howls bellowing from outside the carriage.

It was a familiar howl, a howl under which she once suffered defeat, and as a result, grew. Yet it was also the voice of the king who looked after Reshia.

“Holy Knight, Gene Marlon!? Why is he here!?” Mill said from the driver’s seat.

It was due to her saying that out loud that Lili could tell another powerful foe had joined the fray against the goblin king.

The king that ruled over the Demon Children of Chaos had returned from his trip, and made it on time. In fact, he was right at the carriage’s heel.

When she thought that, Lili looked at Reshia. But Reshia only curled up after hearing the king’s voice, blocking her ears as she did.

“Lady Reshia?”

It’s true that they weren’t always friendly, but after the time they’ve spent, even Lili could tell that something like a bond had formed between them, so seeing Reshia act like this puzzled her.

Reshia was a lot closer to the goblins than her. Was she mistaken? But then Reshia suddenly spoke.

“...Ms. Lili, what should I do?” Reshia asked.

The frail voice that left her lips truly suited the frightened young girl she was. Without her mask as a saint, without her duty as a priestess, she truly was but a girl afraid of her own destiny.

Stupid, Lili cursed herself at the back of her head as she hugged Reshia.

“...The king will die if he keeps following us, but... I...” Reshia said.

"It'll be fine, I'm sure. That goblin won't have a problem with your common soldier." Lili herself didn't know for sure, but she couldn't just leave Reshia alone.

Reshia shook her head. "Goddess of Healing"^{Zenobia} told me... The king can't win against two holy knights."

The power to know the future through one's patron goddess. Normally, that was something to envy, but now it had turned into a curse that binded Reshia.

"...If you give the order, I will fight too. I won't mind even if I make an enemy out of the entire country. I won't regret it," Lili said with resolve.

Reshia looked up at Lili, clearly taken aback. As far as Lili was concerned, it was an order that would end the moment the king died. And besides, she didn't mind using her life for Reshia. Seeing how sad Reshia was, even Gastra's ears drooped as he licked her hand to console her.

But in an ironic twist, Lili's words were what prompted Reshia to make her move.

Though shaking, Reshia wiped her tears and asked Lili to open the window.

"I'm sorry... I made a mess," Reshia said.

"It's fine," Lili faintly smiled.

After finally regaining her usual calm, Reshia spoke. "I'm going to say my goodbyes to the king."



Relying only on instinct, I fended off that lump of bloodlust coming from behind. Three hits landed on my sword when I swung it to my back, but they were shallow and easy to deal with. That's probably because the bastard coming from behind is messing around.

"Ha ha ha, you're really amusing! I think I'll catch you and sell you to a freak show! I'll be sure to make a killing!"

Despite all that bloodlust, he doesn't seem particularly interested in killing me now. That's probably because he wants to make me suffer. What an audacious guy.

But thanks to him following the carriage has gotten that much more difficult.

It took all I had to stifle the impatience welling up from within to measure the distance until the carriage.

Can I make it...!? With this guy behind me and that guy in front—

^{Astaroth}
“Ruler of Wind and Lightning!!!”

Lightning flashed again, this time splitting into two streaks that turned into a whip of lightning as it lashed toward me.

As I dodged that attack, the bloodlust from behind grew stronger, prompting me to leap forward. The rapier from behind glittered as it aimed for my feet. I'm in the middle of the air, but I think I'll have to gamble. That bastard licking his lips right now has probably guessed where my feet will land, so—

^{Accel}
“My life is like a cloud of dust!”

I invoked Accel, blowing up the ether behind me to push me onward into a wall of air. When I was about to land, I quickly put all my focus into gathering ether into my legs, and after mitigating the impact at landing, I ran again.

Damn it!

This acrobatics-like exchange is making it hard to concentrate. The carriage is getting farther and farther, while that rapier-using bastard coming from behind is getting nearer.

“Look out! Your back is open!”

The rapier grazed my side when it thrust out, cutting open a wound. The pain coupled with the piling irritation made me want to turn around and just tear that guy to shreds that very instant, but if I were to do that, I would never reach Reshia.

We've gotten quite far. It's probably not that much longer until we reach the human territory.

I have to go now.

Bracing myself for the worst, I took back my great sword after swinging it behind. Immediately, I felt the bloodlust coming from behind grow stronger.

"Well, I can't have you ignoring me, now can we?" The rapier-using bastard from behind said.

"Beat it!" I spat.

^{Barbatos}
"Ravaging Storm!" The man in front chanted.

The attack coming from up ahead tore the air as it cut a straight line. At the same time, I filled my legs with ether and jumped, then in midair, I invoked several instances of Accel, gaining me some distance before landing as I ignored my creaking muscles, begging for oxygen. Then that rapier came again from behind.

I was waiting for you!!

I struck my great sword against the ground, giving rise to a cloud of dust and causing the rapier-user to falter for a moment, giving me the opening I've been looking for.

—Go! Just 5 more steps!

"Tch, careless! Frenzied Sword!"

I pushed onward as I fended off against the storm of blades, ignoring the attacks that would land only on my arms or legs, as they could not threaten my life. Creaks sounded from my sword when I shoddily received the enemy's sword.

—Hold on a bit more, Iron Second!

It was then that the window of the carriage opened. It was barred with iron, but on the other side was none other than Reshia. Then I felt a pain from my back. Damn it!

He's here already!?

"King!" Reshia cried.

"Reshia!" I called out to her.

When our gazes met, I saw the trace of crying upon her eyes.

Another blow landed on my back.

"Run, King! I'm just going back to the place I came from! So...!"

You're telling me that's your decision, Reshia? You're telling me to run?

"Come, Reshia!"

I stretched out my hand.

"Don't be afraid! If you can't stand up against the gods on your own, I will stand with you!"

"King..."

"Take my hand, Reshia!"

Then I felt a blow land on my legs.

"Ku!?" I groaned out in pain.

"King!?" Reshia cried out.

"What a troubling little princess. I think she deserves some punishment, don't you?"
The rapier-using man said.

"Lady Reshia!" Lili cried out.

A light blow landed on my back when the rapier-using man suddenly overtook me.

What is he—!?

The man swung his sword toward Reshia's outstretched hand, but before it could hit her, Lili managed to pull back Reshia. If it weren't for her, that rapier would have surely cut off Reshia's hand.

I looked to the ground, and for a moment I saw my unmoving legs.

It finally dawned on me that I was tumbling on the ground, and I cried out from the bottom of my lungs.

“RESH!aaa!!”

My hand couldn't reach her. There was nothing more I could do as I watched the carriage leave. Soon it will reach the end of the forest, where I see a great crowd of cavalry waiting.

As I kept tumbling onto the ground, I eventually slid across it. When I finally stopped, I spat out dirt from my mouth, and the first thing I saw was none other than the rapier-using man who got in my way.

He was smiling.

—Unforgivable.

Every word that came out of his lips only served to rouse my ire.

“And so, the princess was safely rescued, and she lived happily ever after...”

—They must pay.

“As for you, whose role is over... It's time to die! The Lightning-Fast Knight shall give you a prompt trip to the afterlife, Monster!”

—Those goddamned humans...! Along with all those fucking gods...!

From within me, in the deepest most part of my chest, a great heat began to stir, reaching out to circulate beneath my skin. The heat was so great it felt like there was fire underneath my skin.

“Well, it’s goodbye!”

The rapier-using man thrust his sword to my chest, but there was no more pain to be felt. My body was already—

“GURUuRUUGAAaa aA Aaa AaAA!!”

CHAPTER 86

TURNABOUT

“GURUuRUUGAAaa aA Aaa AaAA!!”

The Soul of the Berserk King awoke, filling my soul with a great wrath that resonated with the Blessings of the One-Eyed Snake and the Twin-Headed One. Verid throbbed on my right arm, and the jewel affixed into my left hand dazzled a black light as a black flame within it was lit.

—Kill the enemy before you! Kill! Kill! Kill! Kill! Kill! Kill! Cut him, tear him apart, crush him to pieces, rip him to shreds, ground him to dust, grind him between your teeth, pierce him, severe him, slay him! Kill the enemy! Destroy the adversary!

I couldn't stop the hate from filling me.

Defiant Soul forcefully pulled out the power of the gods, but with that stolen power came the hate of the adherents.

—Kill! Kill! Kill! Fight! Fight!! Fight!!! Kill them all! All the humans Ativ created! Kill them all! Slay them! Slaughter them! Wipe them out from this world! —Make them pay! Make THEM PAY!!!

The skills activated themselves without any regard for my will.

It felt like the Hell of Avidya when the abyss greeted me.

When a blow landed on me, lifting me from the ground, a blade entered me.

Ahh, yes, an enemy that I'm allowed to kill is here. No, this enemy here is a detestable foe that MUST be KILLED!

The corners of my lips raised. My teeth chattered as I grit them against each other and the winds of the underworld buzzed in my ears.

—There is an enemy before me. An enemy... that I can kill... An enemy that... I can...

KILL!

“OOoooOOOOOaaAaAAa!!”

Joy filled me from the bottom of my heart.



Gene Marlon retrieved his rapier after piercing the monster. It was quite tough, but in the end he was able to slay it after piercing its heart.

He'd chased it from behind, piercing it ceaselessly to whittle down its strength until its whole body was covered with the traces of his beloved Fifi. Any normal goblin would have long died after 7 hits, but this monster just kept on calling the saint's name.

Its cries were exactly like those of a man whose beloved was taken away. They were wonderful cries. Indeed, there was nothing more pleasing in this world than to take the life of something with awareness.

Such creatures would scream as much pain as they were given, making the moment their lives were reaped just that much more satisfying. Gene was elated.

But that was that. Now that the monster was dead, all that was left was the sweet aftertaste of the hunt. It was time to go home. As for the rest, that Iron-Armed Knight would surely take care of it.

“Hmm... Oh, right, I should cut off its neck as proof.”

The monster before him was a goblin king, whose stamina and strength reached far beyond any goblin lord's. It was a rare and powerful specimen, and bringing back its head would surely net him a medal from the king.

“Being a holy knight is my sacred duty after all,” Gene chuckled as he brandished his rapier.

But that laughing face of his very soon changed into one of shock, for that sword that he swung down toward the monster's neck was suddenly stopped by the monster's left hand in which was embedded a jewel. Even though he'd aimed it properly.

“...Huh?”

He too was a holy knight, however, and he was taken aback only for a moment before quickly jumping back, and then trying to retrieve his sword, but for some reason, it would not budge.

“Don’t tell me!?”

There was a gaping hole over the monster’s back that revealed the guts within, while the holes on its legs showed the white of its bones. Every one of those wounds were fatal.

When the thought of the monster being alive flashed through his head for a moment, Gene froze. That was the mistake of the Lightning-Fast Knight.

His rapier was stuck in the monster’s hand, immovable as if it were held by a vise. He tried and tried to pull it out, and when he thought he finally could, he ended up jumping back, but it was then that the monster’s right arm, clad in flames of black, suddenly lashed out only to graze his chest.

“Whew... That would’ve been really bad if I hadn’t let go... !?”

He thought he was safe, but all of the sudden, a deep wound tore open on his chest, allowing blood to spurt out. Gene was shocked, but the emotions that came after was anger.

“Y-Y-You little!”

To think a lowly monster, a weak little monster, would actually injure the strong Gene Marlo. It was scandalous, it was sacrilege. And he felt his pride shatter because of it. Contrast to him, the monster opened its two red eyes to gaze at him for a moment before bellowing out a howl.

“OOoooOOOOOaaAaAAa!!”

The figure of that monster slowly getting up was truly like that of an enraged beast. There was no awareness in its two crimson eyes as it threw away the rapier in its hand, and ran bare-handed at Gene to strangle him to death.

“You dare, lowly beast!?”

Gene fainted before jumping to dodge the monster, then as he broke through the trees and slipped his arms through, he recovered his beloved Fifi.

When the howls of the monster reached him from behind, he reflexively turned around to thrust out his rapier against the monster. Fifi was not like Gulland's Blue Thunder that had special skills, but it was a remarkably fast sword. Yes, just like lightning.

When Gene thrust out his rapier, he thrust it out three times. Twice on the chest, once for the left and another for the right, and then a third for the solar plexus. Every attack was as accurate as a surgeon's scalpel, yet at the same time, as fast as lightning. Gene's swordplay was truly like a swallow in flight as he attacked relentlessly, not even giving the monster a time to attack. And when his rapier flashed for the enemy's neck, it was aimed straight for the carotid artery.

Gene's fame for being able to take out his enemies in an instant was what earned him the name, Lightning-Fast Knight. Humans, demi-humans, monsters all alike quickly turned into corpses before his terrifying rapier.

But, this time around... He picked the wrong opponent.

“Why won't you die!?”

Gene thrust and thrust, but regardless how many times he thrust and hit, the wounds of the monster kept healing. The will of the god's adherents and their power transformed into a torrent that billowed up from the monster's wounds. The wounds left as they came, black flames taking their place, not even the splatters of blood remained. Gene felt like what he was cutting wasn't a monster but a giant flame, causing even him to falter.

Each time the giant goblin stepped forward, Gene would take a step back. He no longer had that visage of a warrior addicted to killing that he had a while ago. The blessing of the Goddess of Wisdom had returned to his eyes as they darted to and fro, looking for an opening.

Then all of the sudden, the goblin that had been slowly walking all this time suddenly fell to its knees.

—A chance!

Gene bolted for the monster as fast as he could.



I found myself washing along that torrent of will and power.

But...

—Don't get cocky!

After being consumed by the influx of will, I allowed myself to fall on my knees. I don't have the time to be idling about here.

There is still... a chance to save Reshia. I have to push on. I can't be wasting away like this... against an opponent like this... in a place like this...!

As I invoked Defiant Soul, the flow of will entering me grew stronger, but I held on against it. That will was like a mass of hate as it bore its fangs into me and corroded my will, but I did not falter, and I bit it back!

—I will eat you!

I'll devour everything! Even the very will of the gods' adherents!

Your hate, your envy, your resentment, your wrath, your fears, your grudges... I will consume everything!

I will devour everything to push onwards. If I do that, my hand will surely reach Reshia. So don't you ever think the likes of you can corrode MY will!

I took back the reins of reason, and with the opening of my eyes, I cut open the darkness.

“OooOAaOO!!”

I moved my right hand to meet the approaching rapier. It was easy to guess where it

was headed, and so I stopped it right before it hit my neck with the palm of my sword.

The rapier sunk into my hand, yet even as it did, I let it go deeper... deeper... even deeper, and then—

“Caught you,” I said as I grabbed the hand of the rapier-using man that was holding the rapier’s hilt.

Blood spurted out of my hand as I grabbed his arm with enough strength to crush it. He screamed. Unfortunately, there would be no forgiving.

I lifted him up just like that as I slammed his body into a tree... then to the ground, and then the tree, the ground, the tree... Any other human would have died after being handled like that, but this one was still alive.

In fact, he continued to glare at me with hostility even as I held his life in the palm of my hands. So, it seems this one really was an elite after all. In that case, just killing him would be a waste.

The man could no longer move when I lifted him up, and he dangled down like a puppet when I did. And then placing my other palm onto his body to hold him still... I tore off his arm.

The man screamed like never before. He cried with agony like one whose very soul had been plucked out. But it was exactly because of that that this whole thing was meaningful. A pain so great it made one yearn for death, yet the rapier-using man yet lived. Good, it’s just as I expected.

The power within his body regenerated his body just enough to let him survive.

It remains to be seen whether he actually could survive with just that.

“Human,” I said, “I want you to carry a message to the humans waiting outside the forest.”

I’ll have this one play as a messenger. He will be the one to bring my declaration of war.

“Tell them that if they’re thinking of hunting us, we will respond in kind.”

I stepped on the fallen rapier-using man. The man cried out in pain, but I ignored him.

“And if they ever lay on hand on Reshia Fel Zeal, I will make the suffer a pain worse than death.”

After saying my piece, I lifted the man with his good arm.

“Remember? Good. Now, go!”

And then I threw him.

“Remember, human! Remember well! You took what is precious to me! So I too will take what is precious to you!”

Pushing aside the trees, I threw the rapier-using man’s slender body through the forest, then I turned on my heels.

War is coming.

It is now only a matter of time.

“GUuRUUuuuAaa!”

To the heavens, to the land, to all those that lived, I howled.



Gi Ga Rax was at his wits’ end. He had gone here with the other wounded goblins just to keep the humans from getting in the king’s way, but now his body was bloodied, his breath was ragged, and even his steed, Hakuou, had lost its luster.

The only reason he and his men have survived until now was because of the king’s continuing howls that gave them strength.

The fact that the king was fighting near them gave hope to Gi Ga and the rest of the goblins, but only five of his men now remained. And of those five, wounds literally covered every inch of their body; it was such that finding an inch not wounded was harder than pointing out where their wounds were.

Bloodied and exhausted, Gi Ga kept his subordinates within the range of his spear bolstered by his long arm, while they would finish off the humans that faltered before his spear with their clubs and poorly-made wooden spears. It was in this way that they managed to survive until now.

But even that tactic was reaching its end. Gi Ga's iron spear made a gaudy sound as the spear finally crumpled. It too has reached its limit.

When the humans were about to finish off Gi Ga Rax's weakened horde, several shadows suddenly came riding out of the forest.

In the blink of an eye, those shadows pushed away the humans and surrounded Gi Ga's horde. One of those goblins rode up to Gi Ga.

"Sorry for making you wait, Friend." A familiar voice said.

"Lord Alashd!?" Gi Ga Rax said, taken aback.

The goblin who had left to call for reinforcements from the king had returned with an army to save a friend.

As Alashd eyed the bloodied and exhausted horde, he turned to the rest of the Paradua goblins. "Rejoice, my brothers! For it is on this blessed day that we, goblins of Paradua, can prove our valor! Behold! These warriors of the king are standing before you, bloodied and breathless, yet their resolve stands unbowed. What about us? Will we falter in fear! I think not! Therefore, let us show all goblins and humans alike the pride and valor of Paradua!"

Alashd raised his spear, and the surrounding goblins and rider-beast howled out in response.

The goblins of Paradua fought the humans without the slightest hints of exhaustion.



Gi Gu Verbena, who was waiting for the tribes, suddenly received an urgent report: Gi Go has been defeated.

And it seems the enemy who has defeated him was headed here now.

What should he do? Should he break up the encirclement to conserve his forces? Or meet the enemy head-on?

A difficult problem troubled Gi Gu.

“So this is human... They’re strong,” a voice said from above Gi Gu. That was none other than the very reinforcements Gi Gu had been waiting for.

“Lord Rashka,” Gi Gu said.

Even among the numbers of the well-statured Gaidga was an even bigger goblin who stood behind Gi Gu.

“It is well and good to hope to preserve our numbers, but fear too much, and cowardice will take root.”

“What do you...”

“Warriors of Gaidga! To battle!!”

As Rashka said those words, he casually twisted off one of the trees to use as weapon, and he slammed it to the ground. As he cried out a great battle cry, he ran to battle without any regard for the goblins from Gi Village that surrounded the enemy.

The rest of the Gaidga goblins followed Rashka’s mad charge from behind, howling as they did.

The Herculean Wyatt blocked the way up ahead. He held a shield as he valiantly faced the mad charge of the Gaidga chieftain.

Rashka did not give any words of encouragement like the Paradua goblins would. And when he saw the enemy taking a stand against them, he gave only two words: Slaughter them.

“—This is a chance,” Gi Gu muttered as a flash of inspiration suddenly struck him.

“Follow the Gaidga! Don’t fall behind! Follow Lord Rashka’s lead!”

The front was the hardest to break. But that was an opportunity in and of itself, for Wyatt would have his hands full just stopping Rashka.

This was a chance, indeed, a chance to wipe the humans all out!

“Gi Zu, Gi Do, follow them! Kill the enemies of our brethren!!”

As Gi Gu himself joined the fray, he cut down the humans that stood in his way.



Hal and his twenty iron-legs along with the ancient beast tamer, Gi Gi, have been fighting hard since the start of the battle. They’ve been running to the forest to rest up before coming back to strike the humans again in a sort of hit-and-run strategy to slowly whittle down the enemy, but in the end, even their able numbers were decreasing. Even with 20 of Paradua’s elite, the humans’ great numbers still proved a formidable foe.

After the umpteenth charge, when they went back to the forest, a goblin from Ganra came with a message.

—The tribes have arrived.

As soon as they heard that news, it was as if all of their exhaustion had left them and they howled out in jubilation.

Along with that message also came some new orders. The entire front line had switched to an all-out offense against the humans, so Hal and his subordinates were to attack separately from near the village with the goal of stopping the humans.

“...Who gave these orders?”

“It was...”

Meanwhile..

The Holy Knight, Gowen, was currently moving through the forest; his brows were knitted due to all the news he’s been hearing from various sources.

“...The goblins have actually started to truly act as one. Has a commander appeared?”

Goblins riding on beasts fought in the parts nearest to the humans’ territory.

The large number of soldiers in the village preparing to retreat were being kept from moving.

And in the battle deepest in the forest were the slow, but strong goblins fighting.

It was a perfect roster.

But if there really was a commander who was pulling the strings, then someone would surely come for him.

As soon as he thought that, a goblin dressed in robes stood before him.

“There’s no business for your like up ahead,” the goblin smiled sarcastically.

It had a wand in hand and looked closer to a human than a goblin.

“Name yourself!?” One of Gowen’s escort said.

“To the king, I am Gi Za, Chief of the Druids, but to you, good sirs... I am—”

Lightly tapping his staff onto the ground, a whirlpool of blades shot out toward everyone.

“Gya!?” The escorts cried.

In the blink of an eye, several of Gowen’s escorts had fallen.

“—A God of Death.”



Level has risen.

Protagonist

3 => 20

Gi Ga Rax

89 => 99

Author's Note: Gene was crushed, and now the goblins are on the offense. By the way, dear readers, I just wanted to let you know that I really like battles. I like siege battles. I like battles where one side annihilates the other. I like battles where both sides are fighting. I like battles where one is pursuing and the other is running. I like defensive battles. I like battles.

Tl Note: Master of rituals -> Chief of the Druids.

INTERMISSION

RETURN OF THE MIGHTY ORC KING

A great howl resounded throughout the forest.

That was none other than the voice of that terrifying goblin.

“Doralia... I have to go.”

The leader of the orcs, Bui, headed west to the lake as soon as he realized that the humans would attack. He hated himself for being weak, but preserving the horde took priority.

The humans attacked at the worst possible time. They attacked right when the females were starting to give birth and when they were working on the canals.

They came with soldiers and adventurers, causing many orcs to suffer under their tyranny, but in the end, their casualties were still less than the goblins. The goblins would grow weaker if he just left them alone, but he couldn't.

That scary goblin was calling.

Kill! He cried. Exact judgment upon the plunderers!

That scary goblin was calling out to all the monsters of the forest.

You don't have to force yourself, you're under my protection. The monster tree that had lived for countless centuries said, but Bui shook his head.

“If I don't go, that goblin will probably burn you to the ground...”

Was the pressure from that goblin this bad when he met him? Bui didn't know, but what he did know was that he could feel the goblin's great anger despite the distance between them. A wrath so great it seemed to want to consume everything.

Thank you, Bui. You're so kind. Let me give you a gift before you go.

From one of the monster tree's verdant branches fell a red fruit into Bui's hand. Doralia's affections could clearly be felt when he took that fruit.

If you eat this fruit, you will become what you wish to become. But you have to be careful because it will only last for one day.

A shiny, red fruit.

"Thank you."

Bui took his spear and ran. Surrounded by battle-loving orcs, he looked pensively up ahead. Right now they had to obey the goblins. That unfortunate truth would probably make Master Gol Gol sigh if he knew of it.

Bui intended to expand the horde and create a new force of mighty orcs. A plan like that that would carry on to the next era was something that had no need for wars. Or at the very least, not now.

The orcs cared little for trifling matters like reconnaissance. To them power was everything, and battles were a simple matter of crushing everything before you.

"Found them!" Hushing his voice, Bui ordered his fellow orcs to hide themselves. The humans were dressed in armors of iron and wielded iron swords and spears. They hid behind their carriages, ready to strike the instant an enemy neared.

—This is too scary! Scary! Scary! Scary!

"It's scary, Doralia!" Bui said quietly so that no one could hear, then he looked to the red fruit in his hand. "...The thing I wish to become."

Bracing himself for the worst, Bui devoured the red fruit in one go. The blooming taste in his mouth left him speechless as the juice of the fruit slid down his throat to dye his guts in its sweet. Then a great heat enveloped him.

*Ba bum! His heart throbbed. Then his hand shook as it held his spear. No, it was not just his hand but his whole body, bringing him down to his knees to earn the contempt of the orcs.

“Are you scared, Bui!” They mocked. “The orcs don’t need a cowardly king!”

But when one of the orcs laid his hand on Bui’s shoulder to turn him around, what they saw shocked them.

“SHUT UP!” Bui spat with an ire unheard of from the ever frail orc whose eyes always looked down. His lips even stretched so far apart they seemed they would tear as they let out a burning breath that blew onto the orcs.

Each time Bui grit his teeth, his body grew a size bigger. By the end of it, his muscles had swelled, and his body was over twice the size of that small Bui. The other orcs looked up at him.

His gaze was sharp, so sharp it was like a piercing blade, and it sent a jolt running up the orcs’ spine.

And along with the changes of his body was the one thing his predecessor, Gol Gol, had that he didn’t: A brute’s courage.

The new Bui charmed the orcs with his great strength and brutish disposition. Bui himself knew it was reckless, but the madness came with the power.

The forbidden fruit Doralia gave him had instilled that power into him.

Bui grabbed a nearby tree, and then scraped off its thick trunk with his grip.

The mighty king of the orcs had returned, and so, the orcs became one.

“The orc kneels to none!” Bui proclaimed.

That savage figure was just like the late Gol Gol, and it filled the orcs with happiness upon seeing it.

Bui’s words spread among the orcs, and all the more so when it turned into a great roar.

“GURUuuOOOOoooOOoAaa!!!”

The orcs cried out in turn.

“FighHHttt!”

Like that Bui led the orcs to crush the humans.



The craftiness of the goblin before him made Gowen want to curse. It skillfully handled that wand in its hand without giving him any opportunity to attack. Countless blades of wind have been shooting at them since awhile ago, and each time they managed to slip through it to near that crafty goblin, an arrow would come shooting at them from somewhere.

“A trap?” Gowen muttered to himself, unbelieving. Who could have thought goblins could actually use traps? Apparently, the birth of an intelligent king had turned the goblins into a truly terrifying force.

It almost felt like he was fighting against humans, not monsters. Gowen struck down the approaching arrow as he took a step closer to the crafty goblin. But he just couldn’t reach him. It was like trying to approach a withdrawing wave and no matter what he did, the goblin never allowed him to close their distance.

He couldn’t order his men to attack the archers hiding in the forest either, as they would easily die under the wind blades of this crafty goblin. Gowen might be able to deal with the magic himself, but asking the same from his subordinate was too much.

For the first time in a long while, Gowen truly had his hands tied behind his back.

The goblin before him grinned. “Farewell, human. A fair warning: don’t enter the forest again, or else...”

He considered chasing after the goblin for a moment, but when he saw the humans running from the now opened path up ahead, he almost cursed.

“We lost,” he said.

The old veteran was no foreigner to defeat, but this defeat was one of the most bitter ones he’s suffered yet. Because the reason they lost was because he underestimated the enemy.

Because of that that he decided to cut their losses as much as he could and retreat.

“Save the retreating soldiers. I will handle the enemy.” Gowen ordered before going out to meet the retreating soldiers.

“Lord! The orcs are attacking with the goblins!” One of the soldiers said.

Gowen was not surprised to hear that, not even in the slightest. The moment the goblin king appeared, he knew that this entire forest had become their enemy.

“Consider the whole forest hostile. I will protect the back. Go help the weak. We’re retreating!”

Gowen wanted to fly into a rage, but he kept his cool. He’d been looking for an opportunity to expand his territory ever since being given a fief right next to the Forest of Darkness. He would cut down the trees, reduce the number of monsters, all to expand his territory even if it meant going against the commands of the king. That was the plan, and yet now...

When an orc attacked him, he quickly disposed of it by cutting off its head.

“They’re... maddened.”

Gowen’s gaze was sharp like a blade as he kicked away the orc that kept glaring at him despite having its neck cut. Gowen kept himself calm despite his anger as he disposed of the approaching monsters.

After the orcs came, odd goblins started appearing, and then that came.

“The Herculean Wyatt, I presume?”

One of the people retreating was a giant human who lured the enemy to him even as he retreated. Gowen rushed up to him and swept away the goblins.

“The holy knight... My apologies, we lost.”

“I don’t mind. Leave this here to me. I thank you for protecting my men, now go!”

After seeing the wounded giant of a man off, Gowen turned his gaze to another giant. But this time it was a goblin.

"A strange monster," Gowen said.

"A strange human," the goblin said provokingly.

Suddenly, it attacked. "My ^{Slash} fury howls!"

Gowen hadn't even taken his stance when that dazzling black light of an attack came at him, yet he was still able to sweep it aside.

"Not bad," the goblin said.

"Monsters can never hope to overcome humanity," Gowen said.

"Let's try it then... I ^{Enchant} pursue power!"

A black light covered the goblin's club as Gowen brandished his sword.



I can hear master's voice.

What a sad, heartrending, and yet angry voice it was.

In fact, it almost sounded like a scream.

The humans are scary, but if master is fighting, I have to go. Actually, the only reason I'm here is because master left. I'm gonna complain when I see him.

And then I'll play on top of that human female's lap.

I wonder if I'll see the two gray ones too.

Somehow it all seems so nostalgic, even though they're not that far. I did end up running to the south though because of all the stinky iron the humans wore.

But if it means being with master again, I don't mind working hard once in a while.

Yep, let's do it.

"UuooOOn!"

I called my friends.

"What is it, Hasu?"

"Boss, I'm hungry."

My friends lied down when I called them.

"We're going to save master!"

"Orc meat!"

Yes, delicious meat! Does human meat taste good too? But they're so thin, I don't think they'd taste very well.

Anyway, let's go! I happily wagged my beloved tail.

Let's chase out the humans!



After having his arm torn and being beaten all over and suffering a pain so great it wouldn't have been strange to die from shock, Gene walked through the forest.

He had to drag along his leg because that monster broke it too.

"Huff... Huff... How dare... that lowly... goblin..."

Not only was he wounded all over, he even lost his beloved Ffire. If he were to encounter a monster now, it wouldn't matter that he was a holy knight, even he would have no choice but to roll over and die.

But despite being in such a state, the fire of vengeance burned brightly in his eyes as

he walked. His slaves were waiting for him up ahead. He would be safe as long as he can get to them. After that he can go back to the capital or Gowen's group and recover his health. And once he's back up on his feet, he would go back and kill that monster to wipe out this shame. Otherwise, he wouldn't be able to live with himself.

"Gu..." Gene grunted as a fallen tree root took his attention, then he walked again, irritated.

After a while, he finally saw his three slaves.

The two battle slaves were frightened when they saw him.

"Is that how a slave should behave after finally seeing their master, huh," Gene said smiling even as the pain distorted his face, but the elven slave did not react. In fact, she even growled a bit at him.

"...I don't like your attitude."

Nothing was going his way. And now even this elf was pissing him off. Irritated, Gene kicked the elven slave, Selena.

The elf rolled on the ground as he kicked her, but she didn't scream. Only, in the next moment—

"GUuUuRURU, GAaAaAa!!"

Her eyes went white and foam bubbled out of her mouth.

"Wha—" Gene was just about to ask what when Selena extended her hand, and a plant sprang up from the ground and twined around him. With the Collar of Obedience on her neck, Selena shouldn't have been able to do such a thing.

The collar not only weakened its bearer but also allowed the owner to inflict unimaginable pain onto the bearer. But Selena had already lost her consciousness after being forcefully fed the blood of demihumans. Right now, that blood was going out of control.

Any other day Gene would have been able to easily brush aside Selena's attack, but with his body weakened, he was powerless to stop it. Moreover, with the plant

constricting him, he couldn't even utter a word to give an order to the two battles slaves.

As the plant constricted him, its tendrils entered into his mouth to reach into his stomach.

“*Cough, Gu, Ack!?”

When he felt something foreign enter him, his mind started to race as he panicked.

“UuuGAAa!!”

Selena's rampaging power caused the forest to squirm and the vines to grow explosively. As the tree branches grew with a roaring sound, they stretched out for Gene's neck and strangled him.

“Go, Ga, *Cough!?”

When his neck broke, he dangled their from the constraints of the plants and the trees like a puppet whose strings had been cut.

After seeing all this unfold, the younger of the battle slaves siblings, Yoshu, whispered to his older sister, “Let's run.”

Selena wasn't conscious right now, so if they weren't careful, they might just find themselves in a similar position as their late master.

“I'm not running. If you want to go, go,” Shumea said as she watched over Selena. There was a hint of desperation over her face. “It was only for a short while, but that girl is a friend. I don't want to abandon a friend.”

“But!”

“Besides, this place here is crawling with monsters. Exactly where are you planning to run?”

“That's...”

Shumea wryly smiled when she saw her younger brother speechless.

“Seriously, we sure were brought to one annoying place!” Shumea spat as she touched the collar on her neck.

“Then what are we going to do?” Yoshu asked.

“It’s simple. We’ll just have to wake her up.”

“That’s crazy!”

“Maybe, but isn’t that fine? It would be nice to do a good deed once in a while... Especially, now that I’m free.”

After Selena killed Gene, they had been freed from their identity as slaves. For someone like her who has been a slave ever since, this was none other than the freedom she’d always admired.

It was only right to pay back the favor to the one who gave her this long sought freedom. Shumea believed that, though her younger brother, Yoshu, found it hard to agree. In fact, he’d always found it odd how his older sister was always so upright when slaves were usually more hateful.

“Step back, Sis. I’ll start,” Yoshu said.

“You know you don’t really have to come. You can just—”

“It’s coming!”

His sister tried to convince him otherwise, but he ignored her and equipped his helmet.

CHAPTER 87

IN THE ARMS OF THE NIGHT GOD

I turned around after crushing the rapier-using man.

The human territory. It's just right there beyond the break of the forest. Focusing my heightened vision, I could see the carriage Reshia was riding. They seem to have stopped temporarily as the cavalry joined them.

I could just go there and kill everyone.

The hate seething from within me implored me to go, but...

—No.

My subordinates are still fighting in the forest. I need to help them first.

As for my feelings regarding Reshia, I should put them away for now.

Picking up my broken great sword, I headed to where Gi Ga and the others were.



As dusk was approaching the human side huddled together in a room in the village to convene a war council.

Gowen had managed to endure Rashka's attacks by himself, but while he did not incur any injuries, he was left severely fatigued. The man wasn't young anymore. Rest would be needed to recuperate.

"Aging is such an unpleasant thing."

But it wasn't possible to rest and hold a war council at the same time.

"Yuan, you lead the main force. Take them along the road to run to the fief. Corseo is leading the cavalry. So long as you make it out of the forest, he will take care of the

rest.”

“Understood.”

Corseo is an old soldier Gowen knew since back when he received his fief for the first time. He has taken command under Gowen over 10 times already in their long history together. As far as Gowen was concerned, Corseo was his most reliable subordinate.

Even the young Yuan found himself comforted the moment he heard Corseo’s name. Since a man like that was waiting for them, his only duty then would be to ensure that his men safely exit the forest.

Gowen turned to the adventurers. The person representing them was none other than the Herculean Wyatt.

“I would like you to come with us as protection for the wounded. Of course, I will properly compensate you,” Gowen said.

“...Alright. We’re going back anyway, so we might as well,” Wyatt replied.

Wyatt frowned for a moment when he heard the way Gowen phrased his request. “Protection for the wounded.” Gowen seemed to know adventurers well.

Adventurers were different from your run-of-the-mill gang; they had pride. So when someone requests them to protect the wounded, it becomes very difficult for them to reject. And it was precisely because Gowen knew that that he worded his request as such.

“Yuan, have the soldiers rest in turns. We’re leaving first thing in the morning tomorrow.”

“Do not let your guard down. The night is the hour of the monsters.”

“As you command.”

The hour of the Night God, Ya Jansu, is at hand.

If they can survive it, they might just make it out of this alive.

Yet even the twin moons seemed to mock them, as the two moons hid themselves from sight.



Stifling my breath, I prowled through the darkness. When I neared the village, I stifled even the slightest breath I had left. I don't know if these humans are planning to attack or retreat, but it doesn't matter.

Whatever course of action they wish to take won't affect my decision to slaughter them. There was no light from the moons tonight, as the two moons have hidden themselves, but the terrifying expression on my face was clearly smiling.

The actors of this raid tonight aren't from the Gi Village, but from the four tribes. I am moving by myself with a horde centered around the forest hunters, the goblins of Ganra, along with Alashd of Paradua and Gi Zu. There's also another horde centered around Rashka of Gaidga, but their roles will come only after the success of this attack.

After confirming from far away that there was fire lit in the village, I ordered the Ganra soldiers to position themselves around the village, south the upwind.

"Everyone is in position," Gilmi said.

After gathering all the platoons that would be engaging in close combat in one place, we started.

"Fire!" Gilmi ordered, and the archers of Ganra all shot their bows simultaneously, while I led the charge across the fence of the village.

On the other side of the fence, I took a good look at the village.

We need to pay attention to the defensive measures placed around the village.

The fences at the western part of the village are in good health. They've been further reinforced after the orc battle. There are less fences in the southern and eastern parts of the village. And in the northern part, the fences there are still damaged from the orc war.

I did think of speeding up the repairs, but because of all the damage it received along

with the impending trip to the Fortress of the Abyss, it never did get fully repaired. In fact, it's been mostly left untouched.

That leaves the pitfalls.

Again, the western parts has the most pitfalls, while the pitfalls in the northern parts are mostly useless. There are almost no pitfalls left in the southern and eastern parts of the village.

With the defenses out of the way, all that's left is the enemy themselves.

There are 300 enemy soldiers in the village itself, while the enemy cavalry is situated at the end of the forest to the east. It's nighttime, however, so the enemy can't make a move.

This makes the northern part a good place to attack. There are barely any obstacles there, so the only trouble we'll have is with the humans themselves.

As for the east it's a poor choice because of the cavalry waiting at the back.

Hmm... Looks like it's settled then.



The scout leader, Yuan, was a young soldier trained by Gowen himself. He was born a commoner, but with hard work, he managed to hone his skills to a shocking degree. In fact, he was actually the second strongest soldier in this expedition.

The village defense was weakest to the north. It was so weak it was basically asking the enemy to attack there, what with only a strip of broken fences and a handful of pitfalls left. It was almost as if a war had occurred here in the past, and the only defenses they were seeing now are the remnants of that war.

The defense was weakest to the north, then it was only natural that the most number of soldiers be placed there.

—The enemy monsters are intelligent.

Just as Gowen had advised him, Yuan did not see the monsters as your typical bunch.

Instead, he treated this battle as if he were fighting against a sly human general.

The largely undefended north, the fortified west, the weakly defended south, and the closest to the human territory, the east.

The enemy would surely attack in the night. The soldiers were thoroughly briefed on that. And more than likely, the enemy would come from the south.

This village used to be their home. There's no way they wouldn't know of its weaknesses. Which is why Yuan decided to light the most watch fires in the south along with a respectable number of spearmen, especially the elite. And with large shields lined up on the ground, there was more than enough defense should the enemy choose to attack there.

As for the West, there was plenty of defense left, so Yuan decided to leave the adventurers and the injured there.

In the end, this whole battle was a question of probability. A guessing game, so to speak, of where the enemy would most likely attack.

Yuan might have 300 soldiers under his command, but with the soldiers sleeping in turn, he could allocate only 150 of that 300. Moreover, there were four directions that needed to be defended. If he were to evenly spread that, he'd end up allocating 40 soldiers on the front and the back, making it likely that the enemy just might manage to make it to the headquarters, where Gowen was resting.

Yuan was someone whose status did not permit him to reach the position he had today. The debt he owed to Gowen was past that of mere gratitude or respect, so he wanted to overcome this ordeal tonight and pay back the favor he regularly receives from Gowen.

"Enemy attack in the south!"

"They've come! Don't panic! Focus on defending!"

Yuan headed south as soon as he heard that the enemy was attacking there to take command.

The soldiers to the west were mostly injured and couldn't be moved. The north

couldn't be left unmanned lest they make it too easy to attack, so...

"Wake up the soldiers! Have the soldiers stationed in the east to move to the south! We'll bring the battle to them!"

They had the advantage yet.

They could still wipe out the goblins.



The watch fires are moving.

Looks like Gilmi did their job well.

I watched as the soldiers moved south to defend, then I called out to my subordinates behind me.

"We're going! Eliminate the enemy!"

I had left my broken great sword to the old goblin. What I'm using now is the same long sword the humans used. It's in good condition, but the lack of weight makes it hard to get used to. I really need a great sword.

"GURUuuuO000Aaa!"

I cried out with my World Devouring Howl, causing the humans to cower, while the goblins' morale shot up. But that's not all, this howl is also a sign, a sign for Gaidga's Rashka to make his move.

The south looked easy to attack, so we intentionally used it to divert their attention.

The north is undefended by default, so the enemy would obviously focus their soldiers there, leaving only the east and the south.

We could just go ahead and attack the south, but we'd end up with too many casualties. More importantly, this attack is a surprise attack. What we needed to hurt wasn't the body but the mind.

We should keep our losses to a minimum, while maximizing the damage dealt.

If we attack from the east, there's a chance the cavalry might take us from behind, but it won't be a problem if we leave before they arrive.

And so, just like that, we attacked from the east.



When Yuan arrived at the southern part of the village, the goblins' arrows shooting from the forest were easily blocked by the spearmen's shields.

"They're not coming out to fight at all," a commanding officer said.

Yuan heaved a sigh of relief when he heard that. Even better if they don't come, he thought.

"Don't let your guard down!" Yuan said as if to rebuke the cowardice welling up from within him. Then he strained his eyes as he looked up ahead the forest.

It was then that a soldier suddenly screamed.

"The enemy is attacking from the east!"

"What!?"

Yuan's eyes opened wide with shock. At the same time, he grit his teeth.

"Damn, we've been had! Third Platoon, return to your post to the east!" Yuan ordered to the reinforcements that were originally stationed in the east.

"It's fine! We can still recover!" Yuan said to encourage his faltering men as he looked into the dark of the forest once more, but then another report came in: The enemy is attacking from the west!

"That's not good... There are only injured soldiers stationed in the west... Is this a diversion?" Yuan began to suspect, but the arrows from the forest never stopped.

"Have the soldiers who just woke up head west!"

When Yuan realized he'd fallen behind, a sense of shame pervaded him. A monster had actually gotten one over him. Then fire appeared from the east.

"That's really bad. They brought fire too! Someone send an escort for Master Go—"

"GURUuUuUoOOaAAaA!"

Just when Yuan was about to give order, a howl suddenly resounded, causing his body to stiffen. That voice belonged to none other than that goblin king that attacked before.

That thing had to be stopped. Fear tainted Yuan's thoughts, and he rashly ordered.

"Second Platoon, Fifth Platoon! Subjugate the enemy king. Go! Sixth Platoon protect this place with your life!"

Unsheathing his own sword, Yuan led the soldiers.

"What!?"

But then a raging mad beast appeared in sight.

CHAPTER 88

NIGHT ATTACK

The flickering watch fires revealed the monster's great stature. It was much bigger than the other goblins, almost two heads bigger, in fact.

It held a long sword in its hand. It was the same long sword the soldiers used, but the way the monster used it made it appear smaller and weightless. The black flames of the underworld covered the long sword. They burned darker than the surrounding darkness, almost as if they were calling the living to death.

When the monster looked around, it looked like a death god who had come from the abyss in search for a trophy to bring home.

—What is that thing doing?

Yuan blankly looked the monster in the eye, and he immediately regretted it.

The monster's gaze brimmed with hate for humans — for himself, and that ferocity of it made him freeze.

“A-A-A—”

He had to give orders, but flustered, the only thing he could utter out was a list of incomprehensible sounds. He did not even realize the puddle of water that had gathered beneath him by his quivering legs. The blood-red eyes of the goblin king had left him completely frozen.

As a roaring sound bellowed, death came swinging.

The heads of the soldiers nearby came flying with their helmets still attached. One of those heads rolled over to Yuan and wordlessly stared at him.

What are you getting all scared for? Weren't you going to save us? We died because of you.

“A, ahh, AHH—”

Fight, coward! Fight that thing and die! Die! Die! Die!!

The envious voice of the dead toward the living echoed clearly in his ears.

—I’m going to be killed. I’m going to die.

Yuan shook his head at the approaching goblin king, but that thing was the embodiment of death. It would not stop just because of that. ‘Death’ approached him. Step by step, it neared him, but Yuan had already forgotten about the sword in his hand, only continuing to shake his head as he watched ‘death’ approach.

“GURUuuuAAaaAA!!”

‘Death’ howled.

It was as if it were saying it would send everyone to hell. It howled, angrily, as it cut down the soldiers one after another, even crushing a soldier’s head with its helmet still attached with its other arm. It was then that Yuan was reminded of a story he’d heard of before. A legend regarding the very shadow he was seeing before him. Beings born of the abyss, they were called: devil.

—A monster, a real monster has crawled out of the abyss. Humans can’t win. Not against that.

‘Death’ threw a soldier’s crushed head to the side. And before Yuan knew it, ‘death’ was right before him. Black flames flickered around the sword of ‘Death’ as it raised up, but Yuan only watched—

“Yuan, fall back!!”

It was a first hearing that heroic voice so angry, and immediately, Yuan woke up from his stupor, allowing him to jump back.



Using one of the effects of the One-Eyed Snake’s Evil Eye, I could see the status of those whose classes were lower than mine. I analyzed all the humans I came across, causing

my head to ache with all the information rushing, but I grit my teeth and endured it.

It would be best if I can get the head of the commander.

“King!”

Behind me were two rare goblins. I ordered them to break the enemy formation.

“Go! Alashd, Gi Zu! Don’t look to your left or your right, just run straight for the west!”

I saw them off as they ran west. I’ve sent the main force. If they go around to the back, we’ll be able to cut the enemy apart at the same time.

The main purpose of the attack is to instill fear into the enemy. To that end, even burning the village is worth it. So I had the Princess of Ganra, Narsa, use the Byunei Bow to shoot a flame arrow and set my house, the king’s house, on fire.

To scare the enemy further, I also decided to put on a little act as a devil from the abyss, making full use of my naturally intimidating appearance.

Now, where’s that commander?

I gaudily killed the humans I came across. Sometimes I would crush their heads, and sometimes I would bash them. I killed everyone I came across even as I kept my calm. But it’s different compared to when I fought Gol Gol and the ogre lord. A different pressure was weighing on me from within as my soul screamed.

“GURUuuuOOAOAAa!”

Fear me, humans! I wallowed in hate for those who’ve killed my brethren to suppress my screaming soul. If I let them go, they’ll only kill more.

—Is this really the right thing to do?

It was only for a moment, but that hesitation caused a spear to graze my cheeks.

—No, don’t hesitate. It’s too late for that. Are you trying to make the humans laugh? I am me. I will rule this world as the king of monsters. And then I will save that woman, Reshia! This time I’ll protect our promise!

For a moment, the memories from the other side that I'd long forgotten stirred, and the image of someone sadly smiling at me overlapped with Reshia's.

I grabbed the spear that grazed me, and then kicked away the terrified soldier.

—Yes, fear me! Fear me, humans! You have touched that which should not have been touched!

I threw the spear I'd just picked up, letting it fly into a soldier to skewer it dead.

—Where is the commander!?

I looked around the battlefield.

—Wrong.

I cut down another soldier, and then another.

—Tch, wrong again!

With my strengthened muscles, my enchanted sword, and the skill, Swordsmanship A-, compensating for my sword skills, I easily cut down enemy after enemy, letting dark-red blood to gush and dye the field.

—Found him!!

When my eyes fell on a person standing some distance away, the title 'Sub Leader' flashed through my mind. Immediately, I ran to that man, cutting down all the soldiers in the way.

“GURUuuuOOAaaAa!”

I raised up my sword. If I can just get this human's head, we'll have accomplished enough. Fear would dominate the enemy, and pursuing them would become that much more easier.

But just when I was about to cut down the enemy commander, another soldier jumped out of nowhere, angrily yelling.

I tried to read his status but failed.

—The same class!

I swung down my sword against the soldier's.

So this is the real commander!



"This is good." The giant goblin, Rashka, smiled.

"Damn, it's that goblin from this morning!" Wyatt cursed.

Rashka attacked the west with his horde, and the person to greet him was none other than the Herculean Wyatt whom he'd fought this morning. The main powers of their horde aside from him were Gi Gu Verbena, who excelled in leadership, and Gi Gi, the ancient beast warrior. Gi Gu was always leading from the back, so it was only natural that he was uninjured, but Gi Gi being uninjured was mostly by luck.

"Wasn't the defense in the west the strongest!?" Vitz said as he quickly stopped tending to the wounded and wielded his sword.

"I will take the lead," Gi Gu said as he passed Rashka, who was fighting Wyatt, and attacked Vitz. Gi Gu laughed at the strength of the opposition. "It's our home, so of course we would know all the ins and outs. Even the very location of the traps themselves and the holes in the fences."

"Damn it! Are these guys really goblins!?" Vitz cursed.

Gradually, Vitz began to fall back to Gi Gu's relentless charge. If Yugil hadn't jumped in to help him, he would have surely died.

"Be careful, Yugil! This goblin is strong!" Vitz warned as Yugil tacitly walked up after nodding.

The two adventurers worked hand-in-hand against Gi Gu. Yugil would block Gi Gu's attacks with his shield and attempt to break Gi Gu's posture with a parry, after which,

Vitz would attack.

When Gi Gu saw how well they worked together, he laughed. “Are you actually challenging me to a battle of teamwork!”

As Gi Gu fought against Vitz and Yugil, and Rashka against Wyatt, Gi Gi rode his triple head, ignoring the wounded humans around, as he entered into the village.

Following him were the beast tamers under the late Gi De. Gi Gi had heard from them how Gi De died.

—Vengeance must be had.

Gi Gi and the goblins he led had that one thought running through their minds. Beast tamers such as them greatly loved their beasts and their comrades. Goblins reproduced quickly and were usually numerous, so such a quality among goblins was particularly striking.

They trampled over the humans that approached them as they went deeper into the human territory, when a man wielding a flaming sword came to view.

“Boss, that’s the one!” One of the survivor beast tamers pointed to the man who was none other than Bellan, the Wand of Destruction.

As Gi Gi eyed him, he lightly kicked the belly of his triple head. In no time at all, the distance between them was shortened. As Gi Gi took out his axe, he clashed against Bellan’s wand.

“So it was you! Die!”

“From ^{Fire Sword} fire shall be born a blad”

The red gem on Bellan’s wand dazzled brilliantly as flames shot up from it.

The battle in the west raged even more.



The enemy sword repelled my sword. The enemy handled his sword well, making it difficult to exhibit the actual power of enchant. It was hard to land a clean hit, as the enemy kept managing to parry my attacks.

For a moment, the enemy turned to look at the surroundings.

The panic from the surprise attack is almost about to wear off. They'll probably regroup after this. It have been nice to kill the enemy commander before leaving, but that doesn't seem likely. Especially, since he seems to specialize in defense.

It's a pity, but it seems we'll have to retreat.

I slashed up with my sword, and the enemy dodged by slipping through below it. Immediately after, I slashed down, and the enemy backed off even more to dodge.

After seeing that a considerable distance had been made between us, I called forth my ether.

“My life is like a cloud of dust”^{Accel}

I moved so quickly the very air broke, but the enemy dodged again.

I didn't turn around to clash with enemy commander a second time.

We still have time. There's no reason to hurry. The real thing starts once dawn breaks. We've already accomplished our main goal, so it's fine to retreat now even without the commander's head.

I cut down all the humans in my path as I opened a path to the west.

This sword is really too light. I can wield it just fine, but it's really lacking that weight needed to cut the enemy apart.

As I thought that, I bellowed out the howl that signaled our retreat.

Now then, humans.

What will you do?

Will you be too scared to move? Or will you retreat anyway?

Either way, only hell is waiting for you.



Level has risen.

20 => 21

CHAPTER 89

THE NIGHT IS LONG

From time to time, the beasts would howl, and the soldiers would jump awake. The atmosphere was so tense, the humans could not peacefully sleep. In time, however, the light of the morn reached them, even as the arms of the night god held them tight.

Dark shadows weighed heavily under the soldiers' eyes. Every one of them was alert, not even a mice could get past them unnoticed. They knew that fiendish monsters lurked just outside the village.

Those same monsters had attacked last night. Fortunately, they were able to fend them off, but their viciousness was such that they reminded them of the devils of the underworld. All the soldiers that came with Gowen thought so.

The soldiers that could fight now only numbered 250.

If the injured were to be included, that number would increase, but it was still a worrisome figure.

"If we withdraw now, the losses will increase..." Gowen pondered to himself.

Before the break of dawn, in that moment when the dark of the night grew even blacker, Gowen turned to the Forest of Darkness. The soldiers were cowering and horrified, all because of that goblin king's attack.

Gowen didn't know this, but of the forces that were battling against them, the orcs numbered 40, the goblins 50, and the kobolds 20.

"But..."

Despite the various platoons suffering so much, they couldn't be given the opportunity to rest. The option of "waiting" to allow morale to recover was simply not feasible. The longer they waited, the greater their losses would be. And even if they attacked, the forest was not something they could develop. The soldiers were too fearful of the few powerful among the goblins' ranks.

“It seems... there’s no choice but to forcefully withdraw.”

There weren’t many choices from the start, but now they have no choice but to retreat. They would have to run at full speed to the cavalry waiting outside the forest.

“To that end...”

If they do choose to run, the goblins would surely give chase. If so, then they might as well take the initiative. The one leading the chase... that would be none other than the goblin king himself. If they could bring the fight back to them to slow down their momentum, they would be able to quickly withdraw.

Gowen grit his teeth and hardened his resolve.

As the reign of the night god finally came to an end, the bright light of the sun returned to the forest. Soldiers all around heaved sighs of relief, and Gowen left to decide the formations. It wasn’t until when the sun was at its highest that Gowen finished. Yuan would lead the retreat, while Gowen would watch the back.

Healthy soldiers were positioned in front to clear the way of monsters, while the wounded were placed behind them. Protecting the rearmost were Gowen and a group of soldiers he had specifically picked out.

After forcing down their meals, they hastily departed. On either side of the road were soldiers wielding long swords who served both as scouts and escorts for the wounded. In the middle were soldiers with spears, ready to strike at a moment’s notice.

By foot with the wounded, it would take a day or two until their destination. It would also depend on how fierce the goblins attack, but regardless, because of the road, they had no excuses not to bring the wounded.

The roads were still defenseless, however, and they had no intention of spending the night on it. Thus, they would walk be it night or day until they reach their destination.

“Kobolds behind us!” A soldier yelled, almost screaming.

Gowen looked up. A pack of kobolds led by a bigger kobold than the others watched them from behind. They didn’t seem to have any intentions of attacking, but neither

did they seem to have any intentions of leaving.

“...Ignore it. Proceed,” Gowen said.

At the same time, he thought of how detestable of a move this was. Enough to almost make him start wondering whether a crafty human was actually pulling the strings behind these monsters.

Kobolds weren't a problem. They could easily deal with them anytime, but the problem was that the goblin king was probably the one who sent them. If they carelessly chased the kobolds, they might just run and lead them deep into the forest, allowing the main force burdened with the wounded to be attacked.

But they didn't need to chase the kobolds for them to have an effect either. Just their very presence was enough to pressure them. It was a simple pressure, but given time, even the simplest of pressures could pile up to become something heavy. And once the sun sets, that pressure would slowly sap their strength.

Gowen knew all these things, but he had no cards left to respond with. In fact, beads of sweat even started to appear on that ever expressionless face of his. Still, he kept his mind calm.

If he were to break now, the soldiers would fall into chaos. In that case, the soldiers might just scatter and run, making them easy pickings for the monsters to take.

—Total Annihilation.

It could happen.

The enemy was that strong of an adversary.

“Platoon leaders don't let your guards down! I am watching the back. Those of you on the flanks, keep sharp!”

He didn't know how much of an effect that would have, but he truly had no other cards left to play.

All that was left now was to trust in his strength and proceed.



When the humans departed, I ordered Hasu of the kobolds to watch them. I won't let them rest even for a moment. The humans shouldn't be able to stand against this pressure forever. They'll eventually break. And when they do, our attack will have that much more of an effect.

"Don't make a sound. We'll be in trouble if they see us."

We were also desperate. There might not have been much casualties on our side last night, but the continuous battles have been extremely taxing. Especially, since we had to travel a long way away from the fortress to get here. Not to mention the goblins of the Gi Village.

Many of the goblins are heaving and puffing just following the humans. Even the legs they use regularly to traverse the forest freely are heavy now. And even though the injured are at the back, the archers of Ganra all had to work to treat them.

Princess Narsa had to stay behind with the rear group to lead them, leaving only a handful of archers with Ra Gilmi as our archery.

The rare and noble class goblins are still healthy, but everyone else is suffering.

Looks like I'll have to step up.

"King, when will we attack? The fatigue is piling up... Wouldn't it be better to attack now?" Gi Za asked as he stood beside me.

I shook my head. "Not yet. We have to tire out the humans first. It will take a little longer before the hunt begins."

Gi Za must've thought I was being too cautious, as in a rare show of disagreement, he said, "If we don't hurry, they'll make it to the entrance of the forest."

That's true. Which is why, we'll have to carefully choose the timing.

"I know," I said.

"...If you're worried about incurring losses, just use the orcs," Gi Za said in a hushed

voice.

I shook my head again. I won't be using just our strength, I'll also use the others. It seems Gi Za has picked up the ability to read my thoughts to some extent ever since evolving into a shaman.

"I still have plenty of uses for the orc. There's no reason to throw them away here."

Looks like there's still a considerable difference even in war between how much the goblins trust their fellow goblins and how much they trust the orcs.

"We'll be pursuing them for time then?"

"Yes."

Gi Za nodded and then returned to his subordinates to encourage them. Do you think you'll be able to avenge Gi Zo like that? I heard him say.

Right...

I have to teach them...

That conquerors have no need for compassion and indecision, only destruction.



As the march went on, morning turned to noon, and then noon to dusk. The soldiers carried the wounded along the road, wordlessly resting for an hour from time to time. Everyone quietly walked.

They were tired, so tired that even with the kobolds following them, most of the soldiers seemed about to fall asleep. The only reason the army had yet to collapse was because of their faith in Gowen's strength. As long as Gowen was here, they would surely be able to come home. Those were the thoughts of the soldiers. Which is why they were able to save their comrades despite the harshness of this whole trip.

Somehow, they could still act with humanity.

"We're moving!" A platoon leader said.

At his words, the soldiers stood up.

Everyone looked ready to be crushed from the fatigue and anxiety, yet they managed to keep their minds cool and gather together as an army.

“Just a little bit more! Four more hours and the entrance will come to view!” A platoon leader said.

The soldiers raised their heads. It was already past midnight, and after a few hours, the light of the sun would return. The monsters haven’t attacked either. Perhaps they’ve already given up and won’t be chasing anymore. Such thoughts gradually took root within the soldiers’ hearts.

Because of that they failed to realize the kobolds slowly closing in. Not even Gowen himself noticed. As far as he was concerned, the kobolds were just there to pressure them. The ones they should really pay attention to were the goblin king’s goblins, and then the orcs.

By the time he realized what was going on, it was too late. The kobolds had vanished in the darkness and was now biting at their heels.

“Ku...”

“Uoon!”

“Gyaa!?”

As the soldiers were pulled down, their screams resounded under the embrace of the night god.

“GURUuuuAaAAa!!”

At the same time, a howl bellowed. And in an instant, the figure of the devil illuminated by the light of fire flashed through everyone’s mind.

“O-O-ORCS BEHIND US!” A soldier screamed.

Gowen knit his brows.

They've been had. That was the goblin king's howl, but he was nowhere to be found.

Where is he going to come from!? He's clever, so he will surely aim for their weak point. And as far as weak points went...

—The flanks are going to be crushed!

" platoons, protect the injured and proceed!! Don't let the monsters approach!" Gowen said in an almost angry voice as he brandished his long sword and positioned himself at the rear to defend against the orcs.

The various platoon leaders all yelled at Gowen's orders to calm down the panicking soldiers. "Draw your weapons! Don't falter!"

They kept a watchful eye out for their flanks even as they marched forward. All the feelings of wanting to run were suppressed by courage.

"Kill them!!"

But the force that hit the flanks was overwhelming. The noble class, Gi Gu Verbena, the ferocious Rashka of Gaidga, and the adherent of the mad god, Gi Zu.

In no time at all, a hole was chewed out of the humans' defensive line. The injured picked up their weapons to fight, but the goblins easily wiped them out. They were only three goblins, but their fighting power was devastating.

Gi Gu worked exceedingly well with his subordinates to eliminate the humans. Rashka trampled on everyone with his overwhelming black power. And Gi Zu fought savagely with the Mad Dog skill he received from the Mad God. Under their fierce attack, the defensive lines of the humans was quickly broken.

"Damn it, at this rate!"

When the platoon leaders realized that the defensive lines wouldn't recover, they decided to prioritize those who haven't been hurt. At the very least, the injured should escape.

As the platoon leaders came to that decision, they implored the soldiers to walk ahead.

It started to look like they would have to split off from the rear, but if they didn't hurry and quell the confusion, they would suffer even more losses. The platoon leaders clenched their fist at the callousness of their decision, and went to fight the goblins themselves at the rear.

It was a praiseworthy decision, but the soldiers that ran off were greeted only by an even worse hell.

“Onwards!!”

“They came again!!”

Attacking the soldiers that left the rear were Alashd of Paradua and his rider-beast cavalry, Gi Gi and the beast tamers, and Gi Za and the druids.

“Vengeance for our brethren!” Gi Gi yelled as he broke through the defensive line with his triple head. The person he and his subordinates were looking for was none other than Bellan. As they cut down the humans, their eyes darted to and fro, looking for a man wielding a sword of flame.

“Put to rest Gi Zo's regrets here!” Gi Za ordered his subordinate druids before looking around him. “And so, the board is set.”

In the battlefield, in the center of the onslaught of flying heads and gushing blood, where the blood dyed the land red, Gi Za laughed. All that was left was for the king to add the finishing touches.

The stimulation from the battle rising up from his chest caused Gi Za to smile.

The night was yet to end.

CHAPTER 90

BELLAN, THE WAND OF DESTRUCTION

Status	
Race	Goblin
Level	21
Class	King; Ruler
Possessed Skills	Ruler of the Demon Children of Chaos; Defiant Soul; World Devouring Howl; Swordsmanship A-; Dominator; King's Soul; Ruler's Wisdom III; Household of the Gods; One-Eyed Snake's Evil Eye; The King's Dance at the Edge of Death; Magic Manipulation; Soul of the Berserk King; Third Impact (The Third Chant); Instinct; Blessing of the Underworld Goddess
Divine Protection	Goddess of the Underworld (Altesia)
Attributes	Darkness; Death
Subordinate Beasts	High Kobold Hasu (Lv1); Gastra (Lv20); Cynthia (Lv20); Orc King (Bui) (Lv40)
Abnormal Status	Blessing of the One-Eyed Snake; Protection of the Twin-Headed Snake

The sounds of iron clashing resounded throughout the forest.

“Avenge Gi De!”

Though clad in flames, a staff was a staff, and the ancient beast warrior, Gi Gi, found his hands numbed after a failed attempt to cut it down.

Sparks flashed as Gi Gi's axe clashed into Bellan's iron wand. In their struggle, Bellan managed to flick back Gi Gi's attack over his head.

“A worthy opponent. I thank god for this opportunity.” The Wand of Destruction, Bellan, smiled, elated at having found a worthy opponent.

“GUuRUuRUUGAAaa!” Gi Gi roared as he sent a flurry of attacks to Bellan.

The Wand of Destruction, Bellan, was a first rate adventurer, and he endured Gi Gi's attacks. But the battle around them had started to avoid them. The druids Gi Za brought had completely changed the battlefield.

There weren't many among the humans who were trained to fight mages. Battling mages required extensive training or an ancient grade equipment or a blessing from a god. Such things were naturally beyond the reach of the common soldier.

All the more so when the soldiers Gowen led were mostly young soldiers in their latter 10s to 20s, picked up from farmer families. The power to battle against magic was something they wouldn't even dream of.

To make things worse, it was currently the time of the night god, the very time in which the druids could exhibit their greatest power. As Gi Za's blade of wind howled madly, killing everything in its path, Gi Do casted his own wind spell to block the humans' path.

As the druids exterminated the surrounding humans, the goblins who had charged ahead competed over which one was more daring.

"What's the matter? You're getting slower!" Yugil received a goblin's blade that came sweeping from the feet with his shield, but the great power sent his shield flying. The goblins led by Gi Gu Verbena were only normals, but they moved with perfect coordination, to the point that they were almost like Gi Gu's limbs. One dealt with Yugil's shield, while the other two attacked Vitz from both sides.

Vitz might have been an experienced adventurer, but even he couldn't just slip through a pincer attack. By the time Yugil recovered, he saw Vitz being hit with another blow.

Carelessly charging in could get one killed.

"Damn! Yugil, are you alive!?"

But at this rate, they'll just end up being killed by Gi Gu anyway.

"Ku..."

As Yugil picked himself back up, this time the goblins turned their attention to Vitz.

They came at him with a pincer attack just like before, which he dodged, but waiting for him after he rolled was an axe to his neck. A metallic sound resounded, as Yugil's shield had made it in time. If not for that, Vitz would have surely died.

"From above," Gi Gu said, prompting one of the goblins to leap.

Yugil's eyes followed the goblin up as it rose, but Gi Gu's axe was already headed for his legs. Vitz managed to cover him and block the axe with his sword, keeping him alive. Yet who knew for how long? With the battle this difficult, it was only a matter of time before they broke.

"Damnit, is god asleep? If I live through this, I swear I'm converting to an apostate sect," Vitz cursed as he let Yugil watch his back.

God Bless
"O god, have mercy."

Were those words uttered by a god or a demon?

"Go," the White Hand of Life pointed when she appeared as the soldiers following behind her gripped their spears tight and fought the goblins.

"Trifling soldiers!" As Gi Gu swung his arms, the three goblins under him made a blood bath of the soldiers. But as if without any regard for themselves, the soldiers threw themselves at the goblins despite their wounds. One of them even managed to strike out his spear at Gi Gu.

Although shocked, Gi Gu parried that spear before quickly lopping off the head of the soldier.

"...What did you do?" Gi Gu looked down on the now unmoving soldier, then turned his eyes to glare at the White Hand of Life.

"It seems they hated you so much they couldn't stand living under the same sky as you... even if it meant dying themselves," the White Hand of Life smiled just like a god or a demon.

"O-Oi!" Vitz called out upon seeing how odd the soldiers acted.

But the White Hand of Life just smiled at him as always. “We should retreat now. I believe this too is the will of god.”

“Just what did you...”

“The soldiers themselves wished for this: to become god’s vanguards.”

The soldiers were wounded and their legs were even broken, but they stood up easily as if all was right with the world. Then in the next instant, they let out a bloodcurdling battle cry and ran toward the goblins. One of those soldiers was the same soldier Vitz had lent a shoulder to last night.

“Oi!” Vitz called out, but the soldier didn’t even turn to him as he threw himself at the goblins.

“What in the hell did you do!?” Vitz asked in a panicked voice.

To which the girl smiled despite the hellish background that was war. “It is simply the will of god. Don’t you think it’s exceeding beautiful when you think of it that way?”



Scout Leader Yuan was leading the way when he heard the goblin king’s voice, prompting him to up the pace.

“...Sir, the wounded won’t be able to follow like this,” one of his men said.

But he did not slow down even for a moment. In fact, he hurried even more. The truth was that he was simply following Gowen’s command to leave the forest, but the men didn’t see it that way. To them he was simply a coward.

“Scout Leader Yuan!” A soldier grabbed his shoulder, forcing Yuan to finally turn around. “Are you planning on abandoning our comrades!?”

“No! But at this rate...”

The two was just about to start arguing when a voice bellowed, silencing the two.

“This voice!” Yuan said.

“It’s near!” The soldier said.

“We’re going now! We need to get as far away as we can!” Yuan said.

The soldiers all moved at Yuan’s words. It didn’t matter whether they were wounded or not, the king’s voice was like a stimulant that forced them to drag their bodies.

“Just a little bit more and we’ll be able to contact the others outside. If we can just get to them, we’ll be able to fight back against the goblins!” Yuan said to encourage the soldiers.

But then the forest swayed, the dry leaves stirred, and all of the sudden, hope seemed to vanish, even as the morn was about to greet the dark, even as the end seemed closer than ever.

“GURUuuuAAaa!!”

By the time Yuan turned when a howl and a scream resounded together, it was too late. Wielding black flames in his hand, the goblin king tore apart the soldiers.

“Tch... protect the wounded! Those who can fight, form a wall! It’s just one goblin! It we put everything on the line, we’ll be able to kill it!”

The goblin king danced at the center of the soldiers’ formation, wielding the flames of hell to easily and effortlessly tear through armors of iron, while he sent soldiers flying with his rock-hard fists.

Then he picked up one of the spearmen with one hand, and threw him at the line of spears the soldiers had formed. Yet despite that overwhelming physical prowess of his that could even easily pick a man up and throw him, what truly terrified the soldiers was his clever mind that prompted him to break their line in that exact moment.

“GURUuuuUAaaAAa!”

Each time the goblin king howled, the pressure bearing down grew stronger. The very air felt like led, as moving one’s limbs became almost as difficult as in water. One of the soldiers tried to strike the king from behind, but the strong tail of the king whipped at him, effortlessly crushing his armor and knocking him out.

“Fix the formation! Those wounded... just make a run for it!” Yuan hastily said, thinking something needed to be done, but his orders only caused the group fighting in the frontline to crumble.

The soldiers managed to recover their formation, but the crowd of running soldiers blocked their way, causing them to effortlessly die under the goblin king’s hand.

Yuan was powerless as he watched all this take place.

“Shit! Shit! Shit!!” Yuan cursed as he grit his teeth and pulled out his sword. “If it weren’t for you!”

As the goblin king cut down the two soldiers beside Yuan, he slipped underneath their corpses to reach the king’s chest. Turning his hips, he struck at the goblin king. His sword grazed the king’s side, wounding him, but in the next moment, the goblin king’s tail flicked, and Yuan found himself crashing into a tree.

“Scout Leader Yuan!”

That was the last thing Yuan heard.



“Ga Ga GAaRUGUaaGAAa!”

The spear swung, and with it came another head. The iron spear Gi Zu had taken as prize was so worn down it was painful to look at, but the Mad Dog skill drove Gi Zu to keep fighting despite that. He crushed, thrust, kicked all who stood in his way.

He fought with a fervor that suggested he wouldn’t hold back even against an ally, and he recklessly charged toward the humans just like a mad dog.

The sight of Gi Zu killing everything in his path, the wounded and the fighting soldiers alike, finally forced a platoon leader to personally block his way.

“Attack it from both sides! I’ll take it on from in front!”

It didn’t matter that he had to postpone giving orders to the rest of the army, what

mattered now was dealing with Gi Zu.

Two healthy swordsmen took position at Gi Zu's flanks.

Gi Zu went straight up ahead with his spear, ignoring the two, but his spear was struck down, and then sealed as the platoon leader stepped over it, then finally, the two soldiers by the flanks struck down their swords at Gi Zu.

"Nu!?"

But Gi Zu's strength was multiplied several times by the skill, Mad Dog, allowing him to take back his distorted spear to strike at the approaching soldiers. When he turned to the platoon leader—

"Don't look down on us!" The platoon leader said as he swung widely to cut Gi Zu's arm.

"GUuuuaaAaa!?"

Blood spurted, but the platoon leader did not stop. He cut again from the shoulder to the thigh, and another from the arm to the shin. But even as steam rose from Gi Zu's body, he kept standing.

Gi Zu struck out his spear with fury, but that spear was easily parried with skill, allowing the platoon leader to take away his spear.

"Die!"

The platoon struck to cut Gi Zu from his shoulder down, when—

"GURURURUuuAaGAGAAa!"

"—!?"

Gi Zu jumped into the platoon leader, allowing his shoulder to take the blow to stop the attack.

"Impudent!"

He couldn't cut down Gi Zu being this close. He needed to separate themselves first, but Gi Zu held on tightly to his armor. For a moment the vision of the platoon leader shook. By the time his vision was clear again, Gi Zu's mouth was wide open, showing his sharp canine teeth.

The sound of armor being removed resounded as the breastplate distorted and Gi Zu's fangs buried deeply into platoon leader's neck, then using his hands, Gi Zu ripped off the platoon leader's head.

The platoon leader couldn't even scream before he died. As Gi Zu stepped over his corpse, he eyed a flame-wielding man.

"GURUuuGAGAGAAA!"

Hate filled Gi Zu as he attacked his next prey.



Fire burned his wounds. As the sound of flesh roasting sounded, the Wand of Destruction, Bellan's, iron wand fended off Gi Gi's axe.

But then one of the beasts of the beast tamers came for his legs.

"Hmph." Bellan's burning wand swung from the top of his head down to crush the brains of the beast, instantly killing it.

"^{Toto}Go!" Gi Gi said as he rode his triple head, looking just like a knight that rode on a beast instead of a horse.

"Ridiculous! To think you would actually fight me mounted!" Bellan ran right into Gi Gi as he kept his body close to the ground. He was so close to it it looked like he would fall, but instead, he picked up a small stone to throw at Gi Gi.

"Ku!?"

Gi Gi faltered for just a moment, but that was enough for Bellan.

"Gue!"

Bellan looked like he would crash into the triple head when he suddenly dodged to the side and cut the triple head's legs. Gi Gi tried to swing his axe, but by that time, Bellan had long retreated behind him. The triple head tumbled onto the ground, and Bellan leisurely approached Gi Gi.

To Gi Gi's fortune, he managed to crawl out from under the Triple Head in time to receive Bellan's attack.

"...It was fun, but this is the end!"

Their weapons locked as their wand and axe clashed against each other, but then Bellan's flames suddenly started burning even fiercer. Those flames gradually reached Gi Gi to burn his skin.

"GUuRUGAGAAagaa!"

Gi Gi ferociously roared out, but just when it seemed all hope was lost, Gi Zu came jumping at Bellan's seemingly defenseless back. Bellan was a first-rate adventurer, however, so it was only a given that he would be capable of sensing that dense killing intent coming at him from behind.

Bellan smacked his lips as he turned, jumping back to make some distance between him and the two goblins. Then as he fixed his grip on his wand, his hand touched it to make the fire smaller, gathering it solely around the red jewel at the tip of his wand.

"The second one is a mad dog... Damn, these guys really know how to keep you entertained." An overly ferocious smile appeared on the former knight, Bellan's, face.

The fearless Gi Zu ran toward him. At the same time, Gi Gi did so as well.

"GAGAGAAaAa!"

The strength behind that arm was far greater than any Gi Zu could normally muster, but Bellan leisurely saw through it all. As he tried to swing his wand, however, Gi Gi's axe came.

"I'll fight with you." Gi Gi made use of Gi Zu's wild attacks to lock Bellan down. Gi Gi always worked alongside beasts, so it was easy for him to match his movements with

the wildly charging Gi Zu.

His axe locked with Bellan's wand again, but the one with the advantage this time was him. If he could just keep Bellan locked down like this, Gi Zu would be able to finish Bellan off.

With a setup like this, even Bellan would have no choice but to fight defensively... or at least he should have had no other choice, but...

After Bellan distanced himself from them, he parried their blows as he kept stepping back. Gi Zu's skill was actually poor at suppressing people. Yet even without knowing that, Bellan calmly rendered Gi Zu's mad charge useless and fended off Gi Gi's axe.

^{Toto}
"Go! Gi Zu!" Gi Gi said.

"You call this teamwork!? Even kids are better off!" Bellan spat.

Bellan brushed aside Gi Zu's wrathful charge, and then swung his wand at Gi Gi's axe.

"What's wrong, goblin!? Think you can avenge your friend like this!?" Bellan said as they found their weapons locked again.

"Don't look down on me, human!"

Gi Gi forcefully pushed Bellan away, but Bellan struck out with his fist before they separated, causing Gi Gi's axe to fall.

Yet despite that, the one who was shocked was actually Bellan.

Because the place he was pushed to was none other than the place where the triple head was. The three heads of the triple head bit at Bellan's two legs, effectively sealing them.

"You planned this..."

Gi Gi's order to ^{Toto}"Go!" was not actually directed to Gi Zu, but to the triple head.

As Gi Gi picked up his axe, he swung it sideways to Bellan to inflict a fatal wound, but

Bellan used the recoil from that attack to break free of the triple head

“Spectacular, but...”

Even Bellan’s guts started to spill out as the blood from within violently flowed out. But despite that, he continued to hold onto his wand and stand fearlessly in the middle of the road.

“Go, young ones! Blood Oath of the Flying Swan’s Wand of Destruction, Bellan, shall hold this line!!”

That was directed to Gowen’s remaining young soldiers in the battlefield.

“The sin of trespassing into the forest lies with all! You think we’ll let them escape!?” Gi Gi said as he ordered his subordinates to send out the wild dogs.

When the wild dogs passed by Bellan, his wand swung, and their heads were crushed.

Though fatally wounded, the man’s valiant spirit burned valiantly as ever.

GOSSIP

GI ZA'S LECTURE TRANSCRIPT

Status	
Name	Gi Za
Race	Goblin; Subleader
Level	23
Class	^{Shaman} Witch Doctor
Possessed Skills	Magic Manipulation; Three Verse Chant; Chant Cancel; Guidance of the God of Wisdom; Wind Guard; Wind Control; Ether Movement
Divine Protection	Wind God
Attributes	Wind

Today's lesson:

[Ether and Class]

[The Use of Ether]

[The History of Ether]

[Ether and Class]

The sky was clear when I held a lecture on Ether and Classes. My audience was not limited only to my druid subordinates, but also included the other noble class and rare class goblins. It would've been nice if the king could make it as well, but unfortunately, he was busy.

As I opened the class, I started by asking Gi Do what he thought of classes and ether.

"The higher the class, the more ether one can use," Gi Do said.

It wasn't a complete answer, but correct nevertheless. As expected of one of my druids. Me praising Gi Do seemed to have provoked Gi Gi however.

"Lord Gi Gi, what's the matter?"

"I'm hungry."

Wind Cutter
"Like a strong wind. Like a swi"

A wind clad in ether tore the air in front to stir up the dust around the unenlightened fool.

"Eat dust, why don't you?" I glared at Gi Gi to silence him, and then I began explaining.

"From time to time, a goblin is born who can control ether. Such goblins are known as practitioners. And just as goblins evolve into rares and nobles, practitioners evolve into druids and shamans. This was proven a few days ago when I evolved.

When one evolves, the ether one can use seems to increase. But is this really due to an increase in ether? Or perhaps due to an increase in the types of ether?

The answer might vary from practitioner to practitioner, but it is probably the types of ether that one can use that increases.

"Can't you finish in two words or something?" Gi Gi asked.

"Shut up." I said as I hit his head with my staff.

"Shut up... that's two words indeed. Enlightening..." Gi Gi nodded as if understanding something, but I ignored him and continued the lesson.

"To begin with, ether is something that all goblins have regardless of whether one is a practitioner or not. In fact, even the very air is laden with ether. By the way, that's actually something I found out just a few days ago when I was fighting the ogre lord and I happened to sense the ether from the clouds of dust that stirred up."

"Now you're just boasting!" Gi Gu complained.

When he said that, I accidentally casted a small whirlwind toward him, sending him flying into the blue sky, but... more on that later.

[Use of Ether]

“One way to distinguish between the ether inside the body and the ether outside the body is with colors. We can say that the ether inside the body is colored, while the ether outside is colorless. When one’s ether makes contact with the air outside, the color of that goblin’s ether oozes out into the surroundings. Of course, the color is strongest near the source, growing weaker the farther it goes. Which is also to say that the effect is weaker.”

“Teacher, so wouldn’t that mean that ether casted at point blank is really strong?” Gi Do asked.

I nodded. “Exactly. But it is important to note that every practitioner has his own ideal range, which we can categorize into three types: long range, medium range, short range. Then there’s also the division of ether within the body. Gi Do, it’s extremely important to know your range. It’s a matter of life and death.”

“Indeed,” Gi Go solemnly agreed, “You can’t fight without knowing your range.”

The other rare and noble goblins also nodded at his words.

Why do they agree so easily when he’s the one talking?

“When speaking of long range, you can imagine it as the distance from here to another village.”

Right now, we were in front of the Fortress of the Abyss. It would take about a day’s worth of running to get to another village from here.

“Medium range is the range you can see with your eyes, and short range is the area around your body.”

“Teacher, can you do a long range attack?” Gi Gu asked.

“Well, eventually...” I said.

“You can’t? And you call yourself a teacher,” Gi Gu said before he was sent flying into outer space.

Why don't I just get it over with and turn you into a bird, hmm? Not that I'd want to taste you or anything.

"What's the point of having a category that no one can use?" The oldest of the chieftains, Aluhaliha, asked. Hal and Alashd nodded when he spoke.

"To differentiate what can be done and what cannot be done. For example, Lord Aluhaliha, your spear might not be able to kill a bird flying in the air, but Ganra's archers certainly could. Inversely, Ganra's archers might fail to kill a ferocious beast, but Paradua's spears would surely succeed. Being able to understand what is possible and what is not is essential to understanding the battlefield."

"...Of course," Aluhaliha said. Hal and Alashd looked down when he said that.

Were you two just looking for an argument?

"Earlier I mentioned that ether becomes stronger the closer it is when casted. This in turn means that the optimal way of using ranged magic is by first forming the spell somewhere outside the body before letting it shoot. The better you are able to grasp the sensation of controlling ether outside your body, the farther you'll be able to form the spell, and consequently, the more likely you'll be able to succeed at fighting within the medium range."

Gi Do's eyes sparkled, while the muscle head, Rashka, snored.

"For example, like this!" In the next instant, a powerless wind cutter formed right in front of Rashka, shooting at him and waking him up.

"Hmm? Huh? Is it time to eat? Oh, are you hunting? Take me along!"

What the hell was this muscle head dreaming about?

"Erm, muscle... I mean, Lord Rashka, please come over here."

"Oh."

Not like I have any dignity left to protect.

"Lastly, is the use of ether within the body."

I dusted off the muscular arm of the goblin.

“It would have been great if the king were with us, but... Muscle, I mean, Lord Rashka, can you show us your Ra Gilion?”

“Oh? You want to see my technique?”

“Yes, very.”

Rashka happily nodded before invoking Ra Gilion.

Black light compressed into Rashka’s hands.

I waited until it reached the peak before continuing. “What Lord Rashka is doing now is invoking the ether directly within his body. This is a very dangerous thing to do... You do know that, right?”

“Y-Yes...” Rashka said as he grit his teeth.

I knew he was in pain now, but I ignored him.

“Leaving invoked ether in your body is the same thing as leaving a blade inside your body. Such an act requires exquisite control. Our king used something similar back when he fought against the ogre lord, but even he, despite being our king, ended up losing his right arm. As much as possible, this method should be avoided.”

Veins started to bulge on Rashka’s head.

He can actually stop now though.

“Oh, that’s enough.”

“Right!”

The black light shot into the heavens.

[The History of Ether]

“Many consider ether as something that can influence the internal world, the body, or the external world, the world outside the body. But what exactly is ether? Many extol magic as the work of god. And they wouldn’t be wrong, as magic indeed is the manifestation of miracles. The power to heal wounds, to summon flames, or in my case, to summon winds to tear the enemy into pieces. Magic requires just two things: Ether and a chant.”

I’ll explain the history of ether next. The humans seem to refer to ether as mana, but that’s not of particular note.

“Though according to the legends, the gods have no need for chants. It’s just a little tidbit I heard from the old goblin, so I don’t know how true, but supposedly, 400 years ago during the great war, the gods could... with a flick of their arms call upon lightning to scorch the earth or winds to sunder fissures.”

Although it’s just something I heard from the old goblin, it should be fine.

“And supposedly, humans, demihumans, goblins, and all sorts of races learned those techniques. As for who remembers such techniques to this day... Well, there shouldn’t be any. But if there are, then they’d probably be the gods themselves or pawns of the gods. There are also those races that can use magic as if it were no different from breathing. And then, there’s always the possibility of some relic from long ago still living among us today through the use of some life-preserving magic.

As for the chants themselves, I believe they are some sort of ritual that allows one to borrow a small amount of power from the gods. Receiving the divine protection of a god and using magic, it’s almost like being turned into a puppet to play in the gods’ doll house.”

When you think about it that way, practitioners sure are sinful. Especially, in my case where I continuously research ether to make it my own. It’s almost seems as if we practitioners are stealing the power of the gods.

“In conclusion, the research on ether has just begun, so if you ever catch a human or an elf, bring them to me. Dismissed. Oh, next time, we’re studying the order of chants and the most basic process of ether.”

As the exhausted goblins screamed, I ended the class.

This sure was fun.

CHAPTER 91

TRANSFORMATION

In a certain room, where statues of demons lined up, was a beautiful woman peeking through a giant mirror.

“That child sure seems lively,” the beautiful woman said.

“Indeed,” the one-eyed red snake said.

He’d made his body smaller to make himself presentable before his master and was peeking through the mirror alongside her. Reflected on that mirror was the forest and the road where a vicious battle was taking place.

The mirror reflected the battlefield from above, making it easy to see the whole situation. The one road stretching through the forest was the life line of the humans. It connected to the world of the humans beyond the forest, where flatlands, forests, and farmlands were sparsely scattered. Then roughly 40 kilometers beyond that break was a human settlement, one of the countless ones near the forest.

“...Hmm.”

The forest was not always this small. But in time, the humans gradually cut down the forest and hunted the monsters to create more land suited for themselves. The scattered forests beyond the Forest of Darkness was proof of that.

Altesia unhappily snorted before turning back her gaze to the battlefield.

Dotted on the mirror were those who had received the divine protection of the gods. Blessings from the mad god, the sword god, a member of the fire god’s household, the flame god, the wind god, and...

^{Rodo}
“The Fire God, huh.”

^{Haïen}
Altesia looked down on the world through the eyes of the Corpse Bird.

The fire god who has given much to the humans. The god who created the sun, gave birth to the spirits, and taught the humans how to forge weapons and cook food. The accursed god who tore apart the god, Kutiarga, and the mother god, Deetna. The old god who gave birth to Ativ and Hera.

His head became Ativ, his left hand became Hera, and his two legs became the twin gods of the moons, Ervi and Navi.

Altesia muttered those things out with a pained look on her face despite the fact that god she was speaking of was her ancestor.

“I was never good at dealing with him.”

He was one of the few people, the Goddess of Vengeance, ruler of the underworld, had difficulties with.

Knitting her pair of beautiful brows, she looked into the world where a vast amount of power drew from the gods.

The God of Wind, Castor, who created the demihumans with the God of Earth, Nmaro, was for some reason, particularly attached to a certain elven maiden.

A mischievous smile appeared on the underworld goddess' lips

Halfway through the road leading out the forest was a battle between the denizens of the forest and the humans. Those battling closer to the village tried to run, and the goblins gave chase, turning their battle into a game of tag. But regardless, the battle had gone past the point where the humans could still hope to turn it around. In fact, the goblins blessed by the gods even fought in the parts of the forest near the break, where the cavalry was waiting.

The God of Wind, Castor, seemed to have started using his power. Then from among the humans waiting just outside the forest was a familiar resonation that made Altesia narrow her eyes. It was the power of the God of Healing, Zenobia.

“Even though I warned him, he still lost her... It seems he doesn't have the power to fight the Goddess of Destiny, Liuryuna, yet. Poor child,” Altesia laughed when she thought of his despair.

“Has the God of Wind^{Castor} talked to the Forest God^{Chenzhen}? If the forest is changed this much without permission, it’ll turn into a fight.”

That would be fun too though, the goddess muttered as she turned her gaze to the floor. Her eyelashes were so long it almost seemed like they sounded when they closed. The pondering underworld goddess looked just like the the Goddess^{Hera} of Wisdom.

“Verid, do you think Chenzhen is interested in the forest?” She asked the loyal snake.

“...But of course, unless the gods have forgotten it after 400 years,” Verid replied. He had that much confidence as one of those who antagonized the whole world 400 years ago. His black flames seethed when he recalled those times.

“Very well,” the Goddess of the Underworld seemed pleased at his answer.

She pointed to one of the hundreds of snakes prostrated by her feet. “Apostle of that which is faster than the^{Gawyn}, spread your wings, and send word to Chenzhen. Bring fear and judgment to the children of the fire god!”

A gray snake wriggled as it coiled itself.

“I have received thy bidding,” the snake said before turning into a gust of wind.

The goddess turned her gaze back to the mirror.

“Consider this a gift, little boy. Now, kill the humans as much as you please.”



I cut down enemy after enemy with the long sword in my hands, and before I knew it, less than half of the human soldiers remained. I didn’t even need to use the Soul of the Berserk King. This monstrous body was more than strong enough to deal with the average human soldier without any special skill.

I enchanted my long sword with black flames.

The commander was done in just a while ago, causing the humans' formation to collapse. Some of them ran to fight, while some of them ran to flee. Without any order, the humans were no threat at all. I could easily fight them one at a time like this.

The Protection of the Twin-Headed Snake gave me seemingly unlimited stamina and life. It didn't matter how many times my body was wounded. It didn't matter whether it was a great sword or a rapier that wounded me either. The power of that protection would heal me as soon as I was wounded. In fact, the power welling up now was greater than before. Just what is going on?

Is this the power of the gods?

—But with this I can do it. I can wipe out the humans!

The moment I turned my gaze up, the forest exploded.

To be more precise, a part of the forest grew with explosive vigor to block the road. Vines and treeroots gathered together and encroached onto the road.

The humans screamed in despair as they ran. Actually, I'm shocked too. And I'm sure everyone else is too after such a sudden change in the forest.

"Damn it! We can't even get near!"

"Sis, calm down!"

When two humans came tumbling out of the forest, seemingly unaware of what was going on, I sharpened my ears to listen to their conversation.

"Oh, hey! This is the army of the feudal lord. Good timing. Hey! Can you guys help us out for a bit!"

When the female of the two humans said that, it was as if the human soldiers realized something, and when they turned around for just one moment, what they saw was...

"UuuU... u, Uuu!"

A body entangled in a great number of vines.

It seemed to be in pain as it held down its head, then it tried to approach the female of the two humans that came tumbling just now, and called out to her.

“Selena...?” The female human asked.

“UuUGAa!” But the response of that thing couldn’t really be called a response. Then as if responding to the pain of that thing, the trunk of a tree slammed itself into the ground just like a person would his own arm.

When the earth trembled upon impact, the humans finally awoke from their daze and they went off screaming.

Suddenly, I wasn’t sure what to do anymore.

Apparently, that thing wasn’t some secret weapon the humans were hiding.

Regardless, however, that didn’t change the fact that it was swinging those overgrown vines around like some whip against the humans in its way as it headed my direction.

I turned to it to cut it down.

As that monster and I approached each other, we cut down the humans in our way.

In between us were those two humans, who were most likely a pair of siblings.

“—Looks like it’s not their ally either.”

What a pain, seriously... Bringing something like this into my battle.

“Hey, how do you stop that thing?”

In a twisted sense of irony, the human forces were now truly in ruins. Their commander was gone and an unknown monster has even made an appearance. All that’s left is to catch them later, but that won’t be a problem. All of the sudden, it feels as if all that anger that had condensed into a mist within my mind, clouding my judgment, has been blown away.

The older sister of the two kept looking at the monster as she spoke. “You’re actually

going to help us? Great! And here I thought the soldiers of the feudal lord were all pushovers.”

“...Enough chatter. Tell me how to deal with this.”

“Selena... If you can just clear a path for me to that girl suffering there, I’ll take care of the rest.”

“Got it.”

Damn, this situation is getting weirder by the second.

“My name is Shumea. That one over there is my younger brother, Yoshu. We’re both former battle slaves. Thank you for assisting us, Mr... oh...”

When she finally turned around, she froze.

An understandable reaction, but considering the pickle we’re in right now, I’d rather she didn’t react normally.

“My... what big muscles you have.”

I take back that previous statement. It seems she has more guts than I give her credit for.

“Keep your word... Enchant!” Swinging my blade to shake off the blood, I invoked Enchant and clad my sword in flames.

“After me! Shumea!”

“Ahh! Darn it, I don’t care what happens anymore! let’s go! Yoshu, follow!”

“Huh? Wait! Sis! Waaaait!”

For the meantime, I decided to ignore the confused voices.

Footsteps followed from behind as I ran toward that woman named Selena. In response, as if to protect that woman, the vines, the branches, and the trunk of trees gathered together to form a blade, but I cut it down.

“Wow! Sweet moves!” Shumea said.

“You know that’s a goblin, right!?” Yoshu complained.

“Don’t be picky! That boss is going out of his way to save us. And besides, goblins aren’t that much different from demihumans!”

If you have the leisure to argue, how about lending a hand over here?

“Yoshu, shield! If he can get us to Selena, I’m going to try and bring her back! Make sure you protect me then!”

“Well, sure, but how are you going to wake her!?”

“When a woman has guts, there’s nothing she can’t do!”

...

I acted like I heard nothing and just cut open a path like we planned. If worse comes to worse, I’ll just have to cut down that girl called Selena.

Just a little bit more.

Then vines gathered from all four directions to form a wall. A last stand, huh? A bit weak against me though.

I invoked Third Chant (Third Impact), and the black flames clad around my sword burned fiercer.

“GURUuuuAAaAa!”

One slash to cut down the wall of vines, and a body slam to break open the path.

Vines reached out for my feet immediately after.

“Boss!” Shumea yelled.

Keep quiet!

Gathering ether onto my feet, I forcefully tore free from the vines' clutches with brute strength.

"Ha ha, that's something, eh..."

"Hurry up and go."

The path is clear now. There's no reason for me to play around with them any longer. If they fail, then I'll just have to kill that girl, Selena.

"I owe you one!" Shumea tore away the vines around Selena, then hugged her, while Yoshu protected her from the whipping vines with his shield.

On my end, I continued to cut down the vines around.

Virtually limitless stamina, wounds that heal nearly instantly, and an inhuman power, and yet...

With the anger from Reshia's kidnapping gone, I could once again think logically.

Could I really rule over the humans with just this strength?

If I kept going like this and conquered a village, will the humans really just sit down and accept it? Will we be able to procure basic goods by trading with a merchant?

Watching over the humans individually isn't possible, hence it is imperative that I find something to bind their hearts.

That something could be fear or it could also be admiration and devotion. But would the humans respect a goblin?

Impossible.

That leaves only fear.

I would have to kill countless humans in broad daylight to strike fear in their hearts, but... What about deserters? The moment we leave the forest, the number advantage will fall heavily to the humans. Even if the goblins try to monitor them, it'll be difficult.

Especially, with all the casualties.

The goblins might reproduce quickly, but it'll still take some time before a goblin can become a full-fledged warrior.

It's impossible. Right now, the goblins don't have enough strength to rule over the humans.

Regardless how strong I am, regardless how strong my subordinates are, if we leave the forest now and attack the humans, only destruction awaits us.

How am I supposed to end this battle then? Where am I supposed to end this battle? When am I supposed to sheathe my sword?

"Umm... Goblin boss?" When Shumea called out to me, it finally occurred to me that the treeroots had stopped attacking.

Selena appeared extremely haggard on Shumea's back, but she was clearly breathing.

Her long ears had been cut in half... A slave.

"Allow me to express my thanks again. You helped us a lot," Shumea said as she impressively thanked me.

For a moment, I wondered just how this woman was able to be so fearless, but I quickly stopped bothering.

I'm sure women like her come around once in a while.

"Where are you going after this?" I asked.

"Nowhere in particular, actually," Shumea answered.

"I see. Well, in any case, don't approach the forest exit."

Shumea was wide-eyed, clearly confused, while her younger brother looked at me meaningfully, clearly understanding the meaning behind my words.

"Though unintended, I did save your lives. Don't waste it."

Turning my back on them, I ran.

How and where should I end this battle?

I thought hard as I made my way through the forest.

CHAPTER 92

CAVALRY

I swept with the long sword in my hand.

That elven maiden dampened the mood a bit, but with the humans no longer able to stand united, the war was coming to an end.

I don't know about the others' situation, but as far as this place here is concerned, the humans have been scattered. Some of them fight, while others run.

As I hunted the crowd of confused humans, I looked around me.

The other goblins should be coming now if everything went well.

As I thought that and looked ahead, I smacked my lips.

"Of course, it wouldn't be that easy."

A group of humans headed my way as they tried to leave the forest. I brandished my black-flame clad sword and faced them.

"Come."

One of them came thrusting with a spear. I cut him down, then threw him away. In no time at all, those who followed him all turned into corpses.

Each time I stirred up a blood bath among the humans, power would come gushing forth from the depths of my body. The air felt thicker, and it felt like no matter how much I moved, my body wouldn't tire. Like that I swung my sword and cut down the enemy. The trees of the forest rustled. The grass growing from the land, the thorny vines blocking the human, the leaves of the many branches above me... they all rustled as the wind passed, and each time the wind blew, it felt like something was supporting me.

The wind blowing from the forest gathered around me then scattered to the four

directions.

I don't really understand, but it's not a bad feeling. I swung my sword as Instinct dictated, and I turned the humans into a sea of death. The corpses for the isles, the blood for the waters. Steam rose as fresh blood splattered onto my burning body.

Whenever I would look down at the humans, they would back away. When I took a breather for just one moment, the trace of white breath coming from my mouth rose up to the heavens.

"U, Uwaaaah!" Finally, one of the humans screamed and ran, and then the rest followed suit. My blade mercilessly penetrated their defenseless backs.



Though still in the embrace of the night god, rays of sunlight shone as the cavalry watched from outside the forest. Of the many soldiers outside the forest, the one responsible for the cavalry was Gowen's most trusted retainer, Corseo. He had served Gowen for many years now, and the long time spent in battle has left deep wrinkles upon his face. He was a taciturn man. So much so that it was said he would not laugh in the presence of the younger soldiers, but they respected him all the same.

The morning dew greeted the plains.

The place they were standing upon now was also once part of the Forest of Darkness. But under their orders, they had cut down monsters, and were cut down in turn, all to expand their land and open a path to a blessed land.

Corseo sat within a simple tent meant only to endure the cold of the night as he ate a simple meal and glared at the forest.

"How is it, Commander?" The young soldier who acted as a messenger said as he brought medicine to the taciturn commander. The medicine the messenger brought was something akin to tea. By drying Shigeru leaves and boiling them in hot water, then drinking them, one could increase the flow of blood, improving one's health. That was one of the so-called blessings of the forest.

The man who pioneered that tea was none other than the respected knight and feudal lord, Gowen Ranid, who himself was currently risking his life in the forest.

“We might have recovered the saint, but don’t let your guard down just yet. Have everyone be ready to sortie out any time.”

“Understood!”

The saint, Reshia Fel Zeal. The girl who received the oldest name in the tower, Fel Zeal, and the title of ‘Saint’. At first glance she appears to be no different from your average girl, but her face and figure and even the way she moved was unusually refined. Despite that, when Corseo saw her tearful face, he couldn’t help but find her pitiful.

She was young enough to be his daughter. Yet it was to such a young girl that such a solemn fate had been burdened. Just what was that god thinking giving her such a fate? He’d heard she had gone back safely despite having been kidnapped by the monsters, but...

“The holy knight, Master Gulland, is setting off for the capital. Shall we send them off?”

Corseo thought for a moment as he looked at the forest, then he shook his head.. “No need. It is enough to wish them a safe trip.”

“Ha!”

With this that girl’s safety should be ensured. All that’s left now are the soldiers that entered the forest.

Corseo didn’t think the soldiers could possibly lose under Gowen’s command, but things didn’t seem to be going well according to the messenger that dropped by a few days ago.

“We should send them some materials again.”

Horsemen could ride to and fro the cleared out road of the forest to send the necessary goods to the nearest village, yet there had been no news since last night.

Yuan and the young platoon leaders were tasked with the vanguard, while they, the cavalry, were tasked with watching the exit of the forest. It was a foolproof battle formation meant to secure the forest, yet for some reason, Corseo just couldn’t rid himself of this strange unease.

He looked up at the flag of the feudal lord of the west. On it was a horizontally drawn long sword and above it a helmet. That was the crest of Gowen Ranid. Yet even as that glorious flag swayed with the wind, it seemed like clouds would come.

When Corseo looked up to the sky, it suddenly dawned on him that clouds had crept up over him cavalry without his knowing. The sword and the helmet swayed powerless against the blowing wind.

“Commander!” The horseman that left to scout the outskirts of the forest came back hurriedly to report to Corseo. Without even batting an eye for the usually necessary courtesies, the soldier took off his helmet and quickly spoke. “The attack force led by Lord Gowen has been destroyed by the monsters!”

“What!?” Lord Gowen!?” Corseo said angrily in shock.

The already pale soldier went even paler at Corseo’s seemingly angry reaction. “Lord Gowen appears to be holding the line to allow the others to run away, but... There’s no telling whether he’s still alive. The soldier I received this info from also died immediately after. His wounds were just too much.”

The severity of the situation made Corseo look up to the sky.

“...The surviving soldiers are headed here?”

“Most likely.”

“Due to an emergency situation, I am changing our mission. From here on the cavalry will head out to save the attack force! Gather everyone!”

“Understood!”

Corseo didn’t watch the soldier hastily leave as he muttered out the name of the knight he so respected, “Lord Gowen...”

There were two problems Corseo was facing now. One was saving the soldiers, and the other was dealing with the intercepting monsters.

Donning his armor, Corseo made his way through the cavalry as he mounted himself

on his steed.

Once in the forest, the greatest advantage of the cavalry, mobility, will be greatly reduced. According to the report, there were hordes of monsters waiting for them in the forest, but exactly how many was a mystery. If they were fighting in the plains, the heavy cavalry would be able to handle even 300 monsters just fine, but the problem would begin once they entered the forest. They were on a rescue mission after all, so it was only a given that they would eventually have to enter the forest.

The forest will greatly hinder their movements. A hastily built road has been built, but it wasn't well-made. To the cavalry, the forest was essentially an execution ground made just for them, yet they would have to plunge into it if they were to save their fellow soldiers.

"Commander, First Battalion, Second Battalion, and the Third Battalion are good to go!" A young messenger said.

Corseo threw the flag at him. "Raise it."

"Yes, Commander!"

The flag in which was drawn a sword and a helmet was raised high up to the sky.

"Hear me, men!"

Soldiers mounted and donned in heavy armor were lined up as Corseo pointed his sword right at them. Behind him the young messenger waved the flag.

"The force led by Lord Gowen has been destroyed by a great horde of monsters!"

The soldiers faltered at his words, but Corseo brought them back.

"So we must then, as a shield of the people, and as the sword of salvation for our brothers, risk our lives!"

The faltering soldiers were quickly silenced by Corseo's words.

"Those fearful of you, leave! Those who cling to their lives, leave!"

Corseo raised up his sword.

“We are the shield of the people!”

At Corseo’s words, the heavy cavalry responded altogether.

“We are the shield of the people!” They said.

“We are the sword of the people!” Corseo said.

“We are the sword of the people!” They followed.

Corseo had no power over the sun, but the brilliance of his tempered sword struck through the clouds in the sky.

When Corseo saw that enough morale had been stirred, he gave out his orders. He sent out several men to contact the fief, while others he sent out to monitor the forest and scout.

Because the attack force was destroyed, they had no idea where the monsters or the surviving soldiers would be coming from, so reconnaissance would be necessary. Corseo left only 50 cavalries with him along the main road, while everyone else was sent to scout.

“Commander!” A soldier cried out as he pointed.

When Corseo turned to look at the direction the soldier was pointing at, what he saw was a monster he had never seen before. In some ways it certainly looked like a goblin, but it was huge.

“GURUuuRUAAaAaA!!!”

That bellowing howl seemed to devour the very heavens and the earth itself.

“Where are our allies!?”

About 10 soldiers could be seen running from deep within the forest, but one of them was quickly killed when a spear came flying from behind, skewering that soldier as it entered him.

“Save us!” The soldiers cried for help as a sword clad in flames of black struck at them from behind to tear their armor apart like sheets of paper. Blood splattered and their corpses were crushed underfoot. Then another soldier running away was taken by the leg and then smashed into the ground.

*Squash, sounded the body as it met the earth and bloomed a red flower. Another soldier was thrown to the stem of that flower. And when a soldier tripped and tumbled, the monster’s tail came whipping to crush him dead.

“U-Uwaah!?” A soldier cried out as he found himself tripping over a treeroot, but the only thing that greeted him next was the monster’s fist. The soldiers squirmed as they screamed, yet the sword kept coming for their legs.

In no time at all, the 10 soldiers running were all turned into corpses... Or almost, at least. Two of them breathed yet, but it was only a matter of time before the monster would claim their lives.

By the time Corseo came to, his hands were gripping the reins of his horse tightly.

—We will lose if we go.

That monster knew that they couldn’t fight properly inside the forest. That’s why it was taking its time to kill those last two. It was observing how they would react.

“Commander! We have to save our allies!”

—I know, but if we go, we will surely lose.

Corseo’s hands gripped his horse’s reigns so hard they started shaking.

“No! I don’t want to die! Save me!!!” That soldier crawled on the floor and cried out as he reached for the cavalry, but the sword clad in the flames of hell pierced him from behind.

“Commander!! We became soldiers to protect the people!” One of the soldiers around him said.

Corseo knew about that soldier and the others with him. Their families were killed by

monsters. It's not an uncommon story, and in fact, at least half of the soldiers here had the same story. Corseo was like a father to them as he taught them sword-fighting, horseriding, and even the taste of liquor.

"We are a sword of salvation to our allies... right?" Corseo said.

"Yes!" The soldier responded.

"All soldiers—"

Unsheathing his sword, Corseo pointed at the monster.

"—Charge! Save our allies!"

Corseo led 50 cavalries to subjugate the monster.



The soldiers involved in the initial raid are here, but the other goblins haven't caught up yet.

I guess it's not that easy.

But it can't be helped, it's not an easy battle after all. Besides, just because we have the advantage doesn't mean everything will go our way. That's just the sort of thing battle is.

I don't think they'd lose though...

The cavalry is getting closer.

I'll have to take them down here. The armor they're wearing has the same thickness as those armors made of iron and the weapon they're using has the brilliance of a lance.

Taking out the spear from the back of a soldier, I carried it on my other hand. A sword in one hand, a spear in the other. This'll be quick.

Clouds of dust stirred up as the horses' hooves beat against the ground. The white

breath breathing out of their mouths left a trail of white as they galloped onwards, and their disheveled manes rustled wildly with their hastened gait. Mounted on each one of them was a soldier equipped with an iron armor and a lance in one hand, dazzling brilliantly, eager to pierce me. Their eyes bloodshot, when they opened their mouths, what came out was a ghastly cry that seemed like their very souls were being strained.

“UoooO0000!!!”

Shifting the center of gravity forward, I held my long sword in a low stance, while I held my spear over my shoulder with a backhand-grip.

“O000A000!!!”

As the humans cried out a battle cry that carried with it a considerable pressure, I bellowed back with my own.

“GURUuRUUuAAAAaAa!!”

CHAPTER 93

CEASEFIRE

Jumping within the violently blowing gale, I turned to the first cavalry headed for me, then like the string of a bow, I bent my body and let loose my spear, shooting it forth to pierce through the chest of the horse.

That one soldier fell quickly, but the approaching cavalry did not slow down.

Damn, these soldiers are the real deal.

The approaching cavalry quickly filled in the empty position in their formation, then once again lined up their spears. This cavalry's charge was not something that could be dodged easily.

Each and every single one of the horses within in that cavalry were huge, and yet the soldiers could handle them with enough proficiency so as to appear completely one with them. Moreover, their morale was exceedingly high, such that the sight of their fellow soldier falling could not even affect their speed.

What an annoying bunch!

But this was also the last battle. If I win, the battle will end in our victory, if I fall, the humans will fight with renewed vigor, and eventually, the goblins will be exterminated.

“GURURUuuOOOAAA!”

Bellowing out the World Devouring Howl to encourage myself, I kicked off the land, quickly shortening the distance between me and the cavalry, bringing me right in front of their lances.

“DIEEE!” The horseman right in front of me screamed with fervor. And before I knew it, lances were thrust at me from all directions. There was no room to dodge. All that was left now was for me to be skewered, but this was exactly what I was waiting for.

When the enemy raised up their lances, I concentrated my ether on my legs to instantly bring me up to the sky, where I then swung my sword with my right hand to cut down the shocked enemy. As I descended, I folded my hands to reduce the impact of my fall even a little.

Lances were extremely heavy. But it's precisely because of that that they are capable of instantly killing an enemy. Such weight, however, wasn't easy to handle. And some movements, such as instantly reacting to an opponent that's jumped above you, was simply impossible.

One horseman watched wide-eyed as my hulking body crashed into him and his horse.

"It jumped!"

"Damn it, who cares! Surround it and kill it!"

The cavalry quickly turned around as they passed me, then they lined up their lances and charged toward me again. But while the vanguard might have been able to turn around now, the others were still catching up. Taking advantage of that, I took my sword and tore apart their rear.

The strength of this monstrous body kicked off against the ground, at the same time, I—

"My life is like a cloud of ^{Accel}dust"

—invoked Accel and swung my long sword at the rear end of the cavalry. Blood spurted as my blade entered the back of a soldier. As he fell down to the ground, I canceled my ether and left my sword stuck into the ground, while I picked up his lance.

I'm not used to using spears upfront, but I can at least cut and thrust with it, so it should be fine.

Brandishing my new found lance, I killed another enemy. If it's just for cutting and thrusting like this, this lance is actually better than the long sword because of its length.

"Damned beast can think!"

The cavalry managed to turn around, but because they forced themselves to turn around so quickly, the power behind their charge was much weaker this time around. In fact, their formation wasn't even in good order. It was a small difference, but to me that small gap was a gap all the same.

"Die, Monster!"

The lances came thrusting at me with the same power as before. No, they might even be stronger this time. But despite that, I threw my body into that line of lances as I brandished my spear.

"Let my body be inviolable!"^{Shield}

I struck out with my lance at one of the humans mounted, then as the cavalry kept running past me, I struck out again. The cruel sound of the steel tip of the lance bending resounded.

Throwing away the now useless lance, I picked up the long sword I'd left stuck on the ground.

I was able to block the more shallow wounds with Shield, but there were a couple of big ones that got past. I wonder if there's a more intricate reasoning behind how Shield's defense can be broken.

But this wasn't the time to be thinking about that. Kicking off against the ground, I brandished my long sword as the cavalry tried to turn around for the second time.

But the enemy was formidable, and this time around, they struck out their lances to protect their comrades. Only, that attempt to protect each other was just too rough compared to their earlier charge. I easily passed through their lances and swung my long sword against another one of their comrades.

I tore through the air as I quickly moved above the heads of the soldiers, then I sent my sword swinging down the neck of a horse. In an instant, both the horse and the soldier were cut, yet even that didn't make the enemy falter.

Truly men of courage! Annoying!

The enemy thrust their lance from below, and I blocked them with my sword. Another lance came for my chest, but I managed to jump away in time. As I did, I managed to take out another enemy who had just struck out his lance.

As soon as I landed back to the ground, two horsemen attacked me at the same time. Their lances came at me from in front at roughly the same time. In response, I lowered my waist and held my long sword in my armpit.

Enchant
“Turn me into a blade!”

As I canceled Shield, I gathered my ether into my long sword, and then as I invoked Third Chant, I cut down one of the two horsemen in one stroke. One of the lances managed to graze my sides, but I ignored it and cut that one horseman along with his horse.

Tsk, not enough time to deal with the other one!

I exhaled as I watched the other horseman turn around as the wound on my side burned with black flames. My body quickly recovered, but my long sword was already cracked. That’s not to say it’s shoddily made though. I mean I have been cutting down rider and horse together in single strokes. Making a weapon cut something it normally shouldn’t be able to, of course, it would break. But still...

—I’d really like a weapon that won’t break.

As I grumbled to myself, the enemy resumed their attack.

I noticed one of the enemy horsemen talking. That must be the cavalry commander!

The target ascertained, I pulled out the long sword from the corpse and swung it once lightly. I invoked Ruler’s Wisdom III. It was a skill that could be activated the moment I fought against the enemy commander. Once invoked, the damage incurred would increase, but so would the damage dealt. It’s a skill meant to end things quickly. As I thought that, I kicked off against the ground.

The goblins still haven’t caught up. Something must have happened.

Otherwise, they should have already wiped out the enemy.

“GURUuuuOOAAa!”

I bellowed out a howl from the piths of my stomach. That howl carried with it the force sleeping within as it descended onto the enemy, but the enemy was well trained, and morale was high, causing the effects of my howl to be largely ignored. I mustered my ether as I ran. It was better to bring the battle to them before they managed to build up speed.

The enemy at the vanguard was none other than the commander himself!

—Good guts!

“I’ll take you on, Monster!” The enemy commander yelled.

I bent my body so low I almost looked like I was about to get on all fours, a stance I assumed to make it harder for the enemy to reach me.

Our blades passed by each other as we sought to claim each other’s life. The enemy’s lance grazed past my shoulder, breaking my balance, but my blade swung down, cutting the soldier along with the horse.

“Gah...Got you!” The enemy commander smiled.

Before I could even wonder what he meant, a lance came piercing from behind him, skewering him along with me. I tried to block with my sword, but it was too late!

—Doesn’t he care about his own life!?

While shocked several lances came thrusting at me. I promptly jumped back to mitigate the blow, but the pain was still there. I couldn’t even land properly when I jumped back, and I tumbled to the ground, but even as I did, the sound of the hooves never stopped. The cavalry approached with blood lust and high morale, further bolstered by the sacrifice of their commander.

My left arm’s been completely done in. It won’t even budge. At the same time, blood and guts were spilling from my left shoulder, though black flames had already begun to burn where they were.

I never looked down on the humans.

So why? Where did I let my guard down? The ogre lord and the orc king should both be far stronger than them. Even the gray wolves are faster than them. In fact, even the tribes are stronger. And yet...

They are strong!

The power to burn their own lives!

The resolve to sacrifice themselves for others!

This is not the might of one, but the might of many. They are strong. What am I doing hesitating against an opponent like this!?

I may have acquired the power of a monster, but I was once human myself. I should know just how much power humans can show when cornered. They could even kill gods when driven to a corner.

As I stood up, I invoked the Soul of the Berserk King.

“GURUuUuaAAaOGAAAaaGAAa!!”

In exchange for my sanity and pain...

—Give me an enemy, enemy, enemy! I will tear them to pieces!!

Cracks appeared on the hilt as I gripped it with too much power.

—Fuck off!

At the same time, I invoked my Defiant Soul, and fought back the mental corrosion. Like that I managed to take back the reins of reason, but if I were to ease up even a little, I would lose them again.

The enemy cavalry approached.

Ether gushed out, but I didn't use it to heal myself. Instead I gathered it to the tip of

my blade as I released it into the world. Black flames summoned and they clad my blade in their wrath.

But I didn't stop.

I mustered more and more ether until the long sword looked like a great sword as it burned with black flames. The wound on my left shoulder hadn't healed, and blood continued to flow.

I don't have time to deal with it now.

The approaching cavalry gathered together into a single unit as they charged toward me with their lances lined up low.

They clearly intended to scoop me up.

The land shook with the beat of the hooves as the horses breathed with ragged breaths in pursuit of my life.

I wielded the black flames over my shoulder.

—I won't lose.

“Take this!”

Right before the cavalry reached me, I jumped up into the air and invoked the King's Dance at the Edge of Death, a skill that would allow me to inflict twice as much damage as I've received.

And then I swung my evil sword.

With multiple skills invoked, the resulting damage was several folds greater than normal.

And when that great power erupted, it swallowed the entirety of the cavalry, leaving behind only a trace on the land.

Just like that, all 50 horsemen that made up that group of cavalry were gone.

As I landed on the ground, I canceled the skills, and sent my black flames to heal me.

Not good. I strained myself too much. I can even hear the sound of creaking coming from my body. The next battles might be a problem. I'll need to heal up as much as I can, but...

There's something I have to do first. I have to burn into the humans' minds that the forest is not to be approached.

I need to strike fear into their hearts and drive them away. Such that when they leave, they would say this among themselves, "Don't approach that forest."

I don't expect it to last forever. I don't need it to. One year, just that. By then I will have recovered, new soldiers will be under me, and the whole forest will be under control.

But until then, I need time.



As Gowen Ranid battled at the back, he rallied the scattered soldiers and headed for the exit of the forest. Along the way, he cut down the orcs, goblins, and kobolds. The sword in his hand had long lost its luster, but he continued to swing it against every enemy that came his way, almost as if it didn't matter as long as he had something to cut with.

He saved his subordinates that were attacked by the hulking orcs. He saved his subordinates that were attacked by beasts. He saved even the wounded soldiers who could no longer move. Gowen Ranid fought desperately. He used his own body as a shield and fought with his allies to fend off the monsters.

The ghastly sight of battle could be seen everywhere. Humans cut down the denizens of the forest, and were cut down in turn. But gradually, the battlefield moved away from the forest.

The goblins were faithful to the king's orders and tried their best to annihilate the humans, but even they suffered many casualties. Even Gi Za's druids were no exception when they tried to kill Gowen. But while there were many casualties, there weren't much in the way of actual fatalities. That was because Gowen himself was focused on retreating. Though the White Hand of Life could strengthen them, the

range of her abilities were limited, making it impossible to fight a long battle.

When Gowen finally reached the exit, a rare shock filled him, though he did not let it show. Corpses of the cavalry littered the road. Every soldier was equipped with heavy armor, but they were all cut down without exception, their armors torn apart. In fact, even their horses had been split in half.

Just what sort of power would it take to accomplish such a feat?

Gowen couldn't imagine it.

Then when he looked up, he saw the figure of a monster standing.

"Humans," it said.

It was a simple word, but to the humans who had fought so desperately to leave the forest, that voice sounded much like the devil of the underworld. That low-pitched voice seemed to pull the very souls from their bodies. And with the figure speaking clad in black flames, it was the very picture of a fire demon from hell.

"This forest is our land. Trespassing will not be forgiven." Each word was spoken with overwhelming pressure. "If you continue to invade our lands, we will strike back with the blade of vengeance to vanquish you... What say you?"

The clear trace of the violence that had occurred here greatly unsettled Gowen, but he did not let it show on his face. Keeping up a dignified front, Gowen valiantly faced the king. "...Very well. We will no longer encroach upon your domain."

With the soldiers heavily wounded and morale low, Gowen could not make the decision to fight the goblin king and the approaching horde from behind, so instead he promised the king a ceasefire.

Like that the old holy knight's audience with the goblin king ended, and the battle that began with a sword came to an end with only a few words. Yet even as one battle ended, another would surely come.

The king lost his beloved human and many of his subordinates, while the western feudal lord lost the soldiers he so painfully raised.

The winds of war would surely blow again, but until then, they would have to renew their strength.

As for when the next war would start, no one yet knew.



Level has risen.

21 => 36

Hasu

1 => 77

Bui

40 => 82

Gi Ga Rax

99 => 1 (Class UP: Noble to Knight)

Gi Go Amatsuki

54 => 92

Gi Gu Verbena

46 => 75

Gi Za

23 => 43

Gi Gi

1 => 14

Gi Ji

68 => 86

Gi Zu

46 => 1 (Class UP: Rare to Noble)

Gi Do

30 => 60

Gi Jii

87 => (Class UP: Rare to Noble)

Rashka

40 => 67

Ra Gilmi

87 => 2 (Class UP: Rare to Noble)

Ra Narsa

12 => 78

Hal

55 => 86

Alashd

70 => 91

CHAPTER 94

THOSE WHOSE SOULS FELL INTO THE ABYSS

Written below are those whose names were written on their tombstones.

The Wand of Destruction Belan

He put up a fight against the noble class goblin, Gi Gi, and his beast tamers, but died when the mad dog, Gi Zu, joined the fray. He sacrificed himself in his last moments to allow the humans to escape. Age: 37.

Lightning-Fast Knight

Challenged the goblin king and lost due to being ill-matched. Although he managed to keep his life after his battle with the goblin king, he was severely weakened after, losing even one of his arms. He lost his life to his own slave, Selena, after she went on a rampage.

Nameless Adventurer

One of the adventurers hired by Gulland. Though his name and struggles are unknown, it was confirmed that he died during the pursuit of the goblins.

Gowen's Platoon Leaders

Four entered the forest, only two left alive.

Corseo

Gowen's subordinate and commander of his cavalry. He sacrificed himself in an attempt to kill the goblin king. He is one of Gowen's most trusted subordinates.

Gi Da

Though fatally wounded by Gulland, he was able to safely lead his horde to the king. He died in the king's arms.

Gi De

Sacrificed himself to allow his subordinates to escape. Died under the Wand of Destruction, Bellan's, hands.

Gi Zo

Died under Gulland's Frenzied Sword skill.

Others:

Over 250 human soldiers died.

Over 40 beastmen and deminhumans died under Gene's hands.

20 orcs, 50 goblins, and 10 kobolds had their names engraved on a tombstone.

CHAPTER 95

FLOWERS FOR THOSE WHO'VE PASSED

After securing what was left of the village we'd set fire to, I gave some orders, and then I decided to return to the village. The old goblin and the noncombatants who fled during the battle rested at the village.

The humans won't attack any time soon, but their aggressive attempts at expansion is worrying. The feudal lord of the west might have promised a ceasefire, but who knows how long that'll last.

I need to renew our strength as soon as possible and expand.

But before that I should examine the goblins that evolved. It's important to know every goblin's capabilities. Such basic knowledge is needed to decide our future policies.

Let's start with Gi Ga.

Status	
Name	Gi Ga Rax
Race	Goblin
Level	1
Class	Knight; Guardian
Possessed Skills	Spear Mastery B+; Overpowering Howl; Omnivorous; Instant Kill; Adherent of the King; Spear Throw; Warrior's Soul; Indomitable Soul; Insight; Mounted Spear Mastery; Defender's Knowledge
Divine Protection	None
Attributes	None
Abnormal Status	Battle power is reduced by 30% due to having to compensate with an artificial leg.
Beloved steed	Hakuou

He went up a class, but he turned to a knight instead of a duke. The conditions behind this phenomenon are currently unknown. There's not enough data. I'll have to confirm

the other goblins' evolution conditions first.

The most eye-catching of the newer skills is the Defender's Knowledge.

Defender's Knowledge

After a mutual introduction, the chance of skills occurring during battle increases.

So in other words, the same conditions for a duel. Anyway, it makes him stronger, so that's good.

Status	
Name	Gi Jii
Race	Goblin
Level	3
Class	Noble
Possessed Skills	Spear Throw; Overpowering Howl; Spear Mastery C-; Assassinate; Sword Mastery C+; Savage Dog's Nose; Bat Ears
Divine Protection	None
Attributes	None

Gi Jii is a noble class now. He's been with me since before we even annexed the orcs, so it's not strange to see him evolve. Gi Gi's also evolved... Anyway, let's see his skills. He's always been put in charge of reconnaissance missions, so it seems he ended up specializing quite a bit.

Assassinate

No sounds are made when sneak attacking an enemy from behind. Works only for the first attack.

Savage Dog's Nose

Distinguishing between allies is possible even without vision.

Bat Ears

Enemies up to one class above one's own can be detected as long as it's within a forest.

Looks like he'll be most useful paired up with Gi Gi or Paradua's iron legs.

Status	
Name	Gi Zu
Race	Goblin
Level	1
Class	Noble
Possessed Skills	Overpowering Howl; Throw Projectile; Spear Master B-; Instant Kill; Mad Shishi; Bite
Divine Protection	^{Zu Oru} Mad God
Attributes	None

If Gi Za and the others are the first generation, then Gi Zu here is the first of the second generation to become a noble class.

The Mad Dog skill has turned into the Mad Shishi[1] skill. He's also gained the Bite skill. Let's pray his resistance to the mad god has grown stronger too.

Mad Shishi

Battle power increases with the madness. Strength, agility, and defense will all increase.

Bite

Use your tough jaws to tear apart the prey.

That's about it for the goblins of the Gi Village that reached the noble class. Of the remaining survivors that evolved, they evolved from normal to rare.

Status		
Race	Goblin	
Level	1	
Class	Rare	
Possessed Skills	Throw Projectile; Overpowering Howl	Spear Mastery C+; Sword Mastery C+; Nose that Smells Death; Fierce Arms; Man-Eating Snake
Divine Protection	^{Verid} Pitch Black	
Attributes	Death	

Verid
Pitch Black, you bastard. Don't stick your nose where it doesn't belong!

—Younger one, whatever could you mean? I'm lending you my power to help your ambition.

The thoughts of the snake on my right arm resounded within my mind.

An excellent goblin. It must be because he went through such a difficult battle that he grew up like this. There's a deep hatred toward the humans hidden in his eyes, however. And then there's these bunch of no good gifts he got.

Nose that Smells Death

When one's life is threatened, battle power will rise. Increases strength.

Fierce Arms

Can use two weapons at the same time. Skills invoked while dual-wielding are invoked a level lower.

Man-Eating Snake

Battle power is increased when fighting against humans. Strength and agility are increased.

—Younger one, I pray for your victory. Use him well.

Even his hatred, you mean.

I spat curses in my mind before I looked down at the goblin before me.

"I name you Gi Ba."

"I gratefully accept."

Status	
Race	Goblin
Level	1
Class	Druid
Possessed Skills	Water Bending; Magic Manipulation; Deliberate; Nose that Smells Death; Seeker of Knowledge
Divine Protection	Water God
Attributes	Water

A goblin that uses the same element as the late Gi Zo. Nose that Smells Death... well, he's the same as Gi Ba, but Seeker of Knowledge, huh. Must be because of Gi Za's lectures. Well, it's not bad. I'll need a couple of commanders to rule over the humans after all. Any skill that can make commanders is a good skill in my book.

Seeker of Knowledge

Blessed by the Goddess of Wisdom, the growth of intelligence is increased.

Deliberate

Tends to think deeply about things. Due to this tendency, it is possible to invoke skills with a small amount of ether.

I bestowed a name upon the kneeling goblin.

"I name you Gi Bi."

"My sincerest devotion for this act of kindness."

Status	
Race	Goblin
Level	1
Class	Rare
Possessed Skills	Overpowering Howl; Axe Mastery C+; Lead Belly; Beast Heart; Nose that Smells Death; Beast Tamer; Hand-to-Hand Mastery C+
Divine Protection	None
Attributes	None

The next goblin that came was someone with the Beast Tamer skill. Now that I think about it, the Gi goblins that lived through that intense battle were all heavily influenced by either the water mage, Gi Zo, the beast tamer, Gi De, or the spear-user, Gi Da. Considering their positions, I suppose it's not that surprising.

It's my first time seeing the Hand-to-Hand Mastery skill, but it seems to have a rank just like the other weapon skills.

Hand-to-Hand Mastery

Compensates unarmed combat. It is easier to deal fatal wounds against the enemy.

That seems to be it. I guess I won't know just how useful this is unless tested.

We'll have to thoroughly test it from now on.

"I name you Gi Bu."

"I gratefully accept, my king."

Status	
Race	Goblin
Level	1
Class	Rare
Possessed Skills	Throw Projectile; Overpowering Howl; Bite; Sword Mastery C+; Axe Master C+; Nose that Smells Death; Man-Eating Snake
Divine Protection	Verid Pitch Black
Attributes	Death
Abnormal Status	Battle power is reduced by 30% due to having lost an arm.

This goblin lost a limb.

The Man-Eating Snake skill should be useful when fighting with humans, but that hate seething hidden in their eyes... They really hate humans.

He lost his limb, so I'm sure it's a given, but I sure hope this hate doesn't get in the way of my ruling over the humans. I'll just have to be careful when using his sort.

“I name you Gi Be.”

“I will burn even my life if it means vengeance to the humans.” The one-armed goblin nimbly bowed.

Then the last goblin came. Ra Gilmi of the tribes.

Status	
Name	Ra Gilmi
Race	Goblin
Level	2
Class	Noble; The ^{Gadieta} First Archer
Possessed Skills	Bow Mastery A-; Leadership B+; A Dying Wish's Successor; Triple Fire; Forest Dweller; Whispers of the Spirits; He Who Sees One-Hundred Li Ahead; Shadow Stitching; Makings of a Hero
Divine Protection	^{Za Ruga} God of Bows
Attributes	None

Although of the noble class, he looks a lot more like the druids. In other words, that means to say he looks like a human. Blue skin, arms that extend just a little past the waist... If you dressed him in a robe, he'd look not much different from a human. The divine protection of the god of bows is a good thing too.

He Who Sees One-Hundred Li[2] Ahead

Accuracy when shooting with a bow is increased. The resulting damage is also increased.

Makings of a Hero

Will affect one's leadership. Charm bonuses affect not only goblins of the same tribe, but also others.

Shadow Stitching

Can momentarily stop the enemy's movements by stitching their shadows. Can affect enemies up to one class above one's own.

Shadow Stitching... another useful skill. Since it works up to one class above, that means even the duke class can be affected by it. The power relationship between the villages might just change with this. Let's hope Rashka doesn't make a fuss...

With this I've finished examining the goblins.

After counting the goblins, I took those that could move with me to erect tombstones for those who passed.

Most of those who can fight in this village are already rare class. Those who survived without evolving are noncombatants. Namely, the young, the females, and the old goblin.

We picked up the corpses of the goblins who died and buried them in a corner of the village. The knight class, Gi Ga, the noble classes, the rare classes, and me... we each took the corpses of our brethren and gathered them.

From here on out, we'll have to fight the humans while increasing our numbers. We managed to secure the females, but from here on out, I'll have to be even more careful with them.

If they die, everything else will too. No one can escape death... even me.

We dug a simple hole for a tomb, buried the dead in it, covered them with dirt, and then planted a seed in the same spot.

"To the valiant goblins who died fighting!"

A fist to the chest as I bowed. There were those among the normal and rare classes who did not understand what I was doing, but the knight and noble class goblins all followed solemnly.

Gi Da! Gi Zo! Gi De!

You are true warriors!

All things shall one day cease.

Therefore, I shall conquer the world.

So that I may leave behind proof that I once lived, I will leave a trace of my existence on this beautiful world.

CHAPTER 96

THE KING'S GUESTS

“...And? Why are you here?”

Standing before me was the human girl I saved before. Beside her was that elven maiden, listlessly looking around her, and her younger brother.

“Boss, you’re so manly I fell in love!”

Scratching my head with the butt of the spear in my hand, I thought, this is her alright.

“Don’t lie.”

I bitterly smiled at her, and she bitterly smiled back.

“Well, alright. Actually, we don’t have anywhere to go, so I was wondering if you wouldn’t mind having us for a while.”

I say... This girl really has nerves of steel. Those two behind her... The elven maiden is Selena, I think, and the male human should be her younger brother, Yoshu. The reactions they showed when I looked at them was still normal, but this girl, Shumea, is just...

“You are humans. You should live with other humans in a human village.”

The goblins aren’t very happy with the humans right now, and there are even those who possess the Man-Eating Snake skill. I might be able to keep an eye out for them, but it’s still dangerous. And while I certainly intend to one day rule over the humans, I don’t enjoy needless killing.

“Actually, we’re slaves. Our former master died, and... I don’t know if you know about this, being a goblin and all, but when a slave loses his master, whoever catches him will be his new master. It’s an unwritten law, so it would be really dangerous for us to go back.” Shumea nonchalantly said.

The things I've heard from Reshia are well and good, but this woman, Shumea... The perspective she offers is that of someone who's lived through the worst of society. And from the looks of things, it seems that living in a human village is so difficult for people like her that she would literally rather live with monsters.

Bitterly smiling, I asked her, "I can see why you would prefer living with monsters, but you do realize that there are those among the goblins who kidnap the females of other species for the purpose of reproduction, yes? Are you not afraid of that?"

I smiled as I said that. It wasn't my intention, but the result was an utterly horrifying face, such that it looked like the devil himself was smiling.

"I'm sure I'll be fine as long I'm around you, Boss." Shumea smiled.

That innocent smile of hers made me knit my brows.

"Sis!" Youshu screamed.

It was such an odd situation that I was actually stupefied.

"Well, alright. You do what you want. In the name of the king, I promise you safety in these lands," I said.

"Hear that, Youshu, Selena! Thank you so much, Boss!" Shumea said.

"Understood, I'll inform the others," Gi Za said, having come out of nowhere, as he looked carefully at the elf and the humans. He looked especially taken in by the elf.

"Eek... A druid!?" Selena said in surprise.

Gi Za knitted his brows.

"You should be more careful with your tongue, little girl. I am not a druid, but a shaman," Gi Za said as he grabbed Selena's hand.

"L-Let go! What are you planning!?" Selena cried.

"What, you say? I want you to teach me a couple of things. Now, hurry! We have much to do!" Gi Za said.

“W-Wait a moment! Boss!” Shumea cried out to me.

The way he talks is really just begging for misunderstandings.

I continued to watch them for a bit, but once things looked like they were about to escalate, I stepped in.

“Gi Za, Selena thinks she’s about to be raped,” I said.

“What!?” Gi Za said in surprise as he glared sharply. He first turned to the frightened elven maiden, then to the humans, and then back to me. I nodded to the unbelieving goblin while holding back my laughter, and Gi Za finally let Selena go.

Immediately, the frightened elf ran behind Shumea. Seeing all this happen brought a huge grin on my face.

“To rid ourselves of this misunderstanding, what Gi Za wants you to teach him is the elven knowledge on magic.”

Gi Za nodded pitifully as I said that, while the frightened Selena looked alternately between me, Gi Za, and Shumea.

“I think you’ll have to give up for today, Gi Za,” I said.

“Sigh... I suppose it can’t be helped. I don’t enjoy forcing others either,” he said resignedly.

When Selena saw that, she finally heaved a sigh of relief.

“Gi Za, let the others know they’re my guest.”

“Guest? Not your treasure?”

“Yes, is there a problem?”

“No, I misspoke.”

“Inform the newly evolved nobles to gather too. I have yet to give them their family

names.”

After Gi Za nodded, he vanished like the wind.

It seems his wounds are alright now.



Kneeling before me were the newly evolved nobles. Namely...

The ancient beast warrior, Gi Gi, the assassin, Gi Ji, the mad shishi, Gi Zu, Ra Gilmi of Ganra, and the shaman, Gi Za.

I started off with Gi Gi, who evolved during the trip back to the fortress. He would be one of the more senior one among them.

“I name you Orudo. Hence forth you shall be known as Gi Gi Orudo. With this name I give you the right to raise your own household.”

“My deepest sincerity to the king,” Gi Gi Orudo respectfully bowed.

Next was the assassin, Gi Ji; a goblin who excels in reconnaissance missions thanks to that powerful nose of his. He will be a crucial member from here on out, especially once we leave the forest.

“I name you Arsil. Hence forth you shall be known as Gi Ji Arsil. With this name I give you the right to raise your own household.”

“I shall use my strength for the king.”

Next was the mad shishi, Gi Zu.

I really wish he’d get that ferocious tendencies of his under control. Thanks to it, he could be a good match against me, but because of it he’s never suffered defeat.

“I name you Ruo. Hence forth you shall be known as Gi Zu Ruo. With this name I give you the right to raise your own household.”

“I am forever your loyal retainer, my king!”

He seems alright for now. Looks like he's able to keep that madness of his in check.

After Gi Zu Ruo left, the next one that came was Ra Gilmi. I'm not sure what to think about giving a last name to a hero of Ganra, but since he wants it himself, I suppose I'll have to oblige.

"I name you Fishiga. Use your power for the future you seek."

"I shall expend all of my strength to meet the king's expectations."

But you actually fight for Princess Narsa, right? You really don't have to give me lip service. After all, to aid me is to aid the princess, and thus, the rest of the tribes.

Last but not the least was Gi Za.

I think I'll name him something with 'za'.

He seems to have picked up on my mischievous intentions, as he made a '∩'-shaped smile as if he'd eaten a bug or something.

"Gi Za... I name you Za!"

"Hey!"

"It's a joke. I name you Zakuend. I expect much of you."

"Hmph. I'll take it."

With this I've finally concluded my business with the newly evolved.

Then as if he was waiting for it, a goblin stepped up.



"King!"

It was the newly evolved rare, Gi Ba, who came before me.

“Why did you allow a human into the village!? They bring us nothing but misfortune!”

Gi Ba grit his teeth hard enough to be heard as he said that, but Gi Ji Arsil did not take kindly to his words, and he pinned him down.

“You disagree with the king’s orders?” Gi Ji Arsil said as he pointed his sword on Gi Ba’s neck. The moment Gi Ba showed the slightest act of resistance, that sword would come cutting down to claim his life.

“Enough, Gi Ji Arsil.”

“Ha!” Gi Ji kept his glare on Gi Ba even as he sheathed his sword.

When Gi Ba turned to me, our gazes met, and the goblin shook for a moment, but he endured my gaze.

“Hear me, goblins! One day I shall rule the world. Humans, beasts, elves, and of course, you goblins as well. When the day comes, I will become king of all!”

I was not speaking it, I was declaring it.

“Don’t you hate them king!?” Gi Ba asked.

“I don’t hate all of them. Only those who stole my treasure,” I said, at which Gi Ba cast his eyes down. “I won’t tell you not to hate them. But should you reach a point where you cannot help yourself but want to kill my guests, then come to me. I will neither hide nor run.”

Gi Ba grasped a lump of earth within his hands as he grit his teeth.

It seems Verid’s influence has been progressing faster than expected. If they lose their minds, I will have no choice but to put them down myself. Executing one’s subordinates is not something a king could push onto his subordinates. Such an act would put to shame the title: king.

Look! Because of what you did controlling them has gotten so difficult!

—Hmph. The divine protection was too strong, it seems. A pity.

I spat curses at that overly egocentric response.

—If worse comes to worse, you should put him down. You'll be able to devour our strength too.

This time the one to grit his teeth was me. I grit them so hard it seemed like my molars would break. I can't let that happen. I won't let them end up as you wish.

My subordinates are my blood and flesh. All of them.

I have no intentions of shirking away from my duties of cutting off the useless parts, but as much as possible...

"If you understand, withdraw," I said, making my voice as calm as could be to admonish the goblin and help cool his head.

Since you had the fortune of becoming a rare class, then so long as you have the strength, you should be able to overcome this ordeal.

Become one who can bring together warriors to become a pillar that will support this country. If you cannot do that, then I might have to dye my hands in the blood of an ally. It's a terrifying thought, but it's not something I must fear.

I have made my resolve.

I can't turn back.

I am already on the path of world domination.



Verid's influence on Gi Ba has grown stronger.

Verid's influence on Gi Be has grown stronger.

CHAPTER 97

THE HERO'S RETURN

The gray wolf, Cynthia, growled as she chased a rabbit. Hunting was well and good, but I pray she doesn't get lost. After successfully hunting the rabbit, she came running back to me with the rabbit in her mouth, gently placing it before my feet before grooming herself and then yawning.

It seems she intends to give me a share.

"You don't need to hold back. Have your fill." I patted Cynthia as I sat cross-legged next to a spear deer I'd hunted.

"Kuun," Cynthia said back.

Most of the tribes had already gone back to the fortress, so I took Cynthia with me to visit the orc village. The orcs helped out a lot in the previous battle. If it weren't for them, more blood would have been spilled, so I need to reward them. I'm going there to talk about that reward.

There's another reason why I'm taking Cynthia along, and that's because Gastra disappeared during the war. Hopefully this trip will cheer her up.

The orc village is situated north of the lake. It used to be Gi Za Zakuend's former village. Speaking of which, he's been really interested in learning the elf's knowledge, but it seems he just can't convince the elf to talk even after talking to Shumea.

It could be a problem if he becomes too obsessed with his pursuit of knowledge, but... he's definitely an odd one. The druids under him are all intelligent, so at one point, I was hoping they would become horde leaders, but... From the looks of things, they're more like scholars than generals.

As far as those who could lead a charge go, there's Rashka from the tribes. From the village there's Gi Ga Rax, who also happens to be the only knight goblin so far, the sword god's adherent, Gi Go Amatsuki, and the mad shishi, Gi Zu Ruo.

As for those who could lead from the back, there's Ra Gilmi Fishiga from the tribes, and Gi Gu Verbena from the village, whose right-hand man would be the wide-eyed Gi Jii. Unfortunately, the latter has his hands full just assisting, so having him lead a horde himself will still take some time.

As for someone who could oversee the whole battlefield, unfortunately, there's none. I should actually take that seat for myself, but I find it difficult to just sit back and watch my subordinates die without doing anything. As soon as I see them in danger, an urge rushes through me, compelling me to go.

This body is actually really difficult to control.

As for who would take that seat, such a goblin might one day appear, or I might find one in the distant lands.

Hmm... Attacking other lands, huh...

"Shall we go, Cynthia?"

After seeing Cynthia finish up the rabbit she hunted just a while ago, I carried the spear deer over my shoulder, and we began walking for the orc village.



The capital was in high spirits because of the hero's return.

Crowds gathered at the sides of the road to see the heroic return of the holy knight adventurer. Castle guards stood watch to ensure no one got hurt, though many still did. Little girls threw flowers from the second floor of a building, while children ran after the carriage the hero and the saint rode, and lavish adventurers flicked chips in the various bars as they merrily drank and sang.

"Won't you answer the crowd?" Gulland asked.

An open carriage pulled by two white horses had been prepared specifically for the day's festivities. Gulland stood on the carriage with an air of composure, while Reshia hung her head down. Her appearance was a rare sight to begin with, but with the white kimono that the king had ordered to be made for her, she looked exactly like a noble saint who would offer prayers to the gods.

“...” Reshia did not respond, only quietly looking down as if the crowd did not exist.

Gulland smacked his lips, but he continued waving at the crowd.

Not long after the carriage passed by the castle gates, and as it closed, the saint and the hero exited the carriage. Soldiers packed the castle; they looked on with gazes of envy at the hero, while gazes of longing and pity fell upon Reshia.

“The king has been expecting you, great hero, Gulland. And you as well, Lady Reshia Fel Zeal. We are glad to see you safe and well.”

It was a middle-aged knight who came out to greet them.

“Allow me to escort you.”

The saint and the hero wordlessly followed, passing through stone-built halls and marble pillars to a giant door from which scarlet carpet had been rolled out, beside which imperial guards donned in full armor stood watch, each with a spear in hand.

“The hero has returned,” the old knight declared.

The soldiers opened the giant door from outside, revealing the figure of King Ashtal on his glorious throne and the countless people of influence standing beside the scarlet carpet.

“Please,” the middle-aged knight prompted.

Gulland and Reshia proceeded toward the throne, stopping mid-way to solemnly kneel before the king.

“I am pleased to see your safe return, Knight of Storms,” the king said as he leaned onto the armrest of his throne.

“It is only by the grace of the king that I am here today,” Gulland said.

“...Lady Reshia, the Saint, it is a pleasure to meet you. I am Ashtal, the king of this country,” the king said.

“...My deepest thanks for rescuing me, Your Highness,” Reshia said.

When Reshia brought up her face to speak to the king, several onlookers heaved out sighs upon seeing how beautiful she was.

“You seem to be deeply connected to the Ivory Tower, enough to make one feel envious...”

“Not at all...”

Scorn and suspicion reflected on the king’s eyes as he spoke, but almost as if he were wearing a mask, the light of those emotions never affected the gentle smile on his face. When Reshia inadvertently looked back down, the king spoke again from high up in his throne.

“I would wish you a quick return to the tower, but after being caught by monsters, I’m sure you’re exhausted. Please feel free to rest in my castle in the meantime.”

“Much thanks for the king’s consideration.”

Reshia spoke curtly, this time without even looking up from the carpet.

“Now then, Knight of Storms.”

“Yes, Your Majesty.”

“The saint would surely be troubled to spend her time idly in the castle with no one to talk to. Hence, I order you to accompany her.”

Voices of admiration rose from the onlookers upon seeing how considerate the king was.

“As the king commands.”

“That’ll be all.”

The first to leave was the king himself, followed by Reshia and Gulland, and then the rest of the onlookers. If one listened closely, most of those present spoke of Reshia’s beauty or Gulland’s heroism, while extolling the king’s thoughtfulness.

"This way," the middle-aged knight said as he brought Reshia and Gulland to a room not too far from the throne. It was gorgeously decorated, having been built for guests. When the middle-aged knight opened the door, a familiar girl dressed in armor saw them and went wide-eyed. It was Lili.

"Lady Reshia!"

"Ms. Lili."

When the middle-aged knight saw Reshia and Lili run up to each other, he quietly excused himself.

Gulland snorted. "If you need anything, just ask the servants, o Holy Saint."

There was a vulgar smile upon his lips as he turned his back.

"Until then, pitiful princess, who fell in love with a goblin."

It wasn't until when Gulland finally closed the door that Reshia finally showed her grief.

"Lady Reshia... I'm sure it'll be alright, I— Uwah!"

"uUUOon!"

Lili tried to console Reshia when Gastra suddenly stuck his head out of her chestpiece. The gray wolf looked around him to check if the coast was clear, then it freed itself from the tight and narrow space, shaking its head as it barked.

"...You're doing well." Reshia pulled Gastra out, and the gray wolf licked her cheeks, unabashedly sticking its nose onto Reshia.

Lili happily smiled as she watched the short exchange between the gray wolf and the saint. Just a little bit, a smile had returned to her face.

"What will you be doing now?" Lili asked.

"I'll have to stay in the capital for some time, though I plan to return to the Ivory Tower

soon.”

“The Ivory Tower...”

Home to the sages in a certain country to the snowy north. It sounded like something straight out of a fairytale, but it truly did exist, and many bureaucrats have come from it.

“Umm... You know, Lady Reshia, if you wish it, I wouldn’t mind sneaking out of the castle with you to go back to the forest. I’m sure Gastra would prefer to go back too.”

“No, if I do that the forest will be invaded again. I can’t have that.”

Reshia knew from her audience with the king just now that the humans attacked because someone from the Ivory Tower had sent out a request. A person who could move even the kings of other nations was rare even within the tower. She could think of several such people who could, but which one exactly was a mystery. Regardless, not one of those people was someone who could easily be dealt with.

“Then...”

“There’s something I want to do in the capital. I’ll be relying on you to get us permission to go out, alright, my dear knight?”

Reshia sweetly smiled and Lili nodded.



The king’s office. If the throne was responsible for dealing with foreign entities, then the king’s office could be said to be the main pillar of the government. Documents would be sent to it every day, and important people would use it for secret conferences, making it an indispensable room for the country’s wellbeing.

It wasn’t as gaudily decorated as the throne, but the furniture used were still of the highest class, making anyone who saw them go wide-eyed at the staggering value of the furnishing.

It was in that very room that a certain knight was kneeling on the blue carpet as King Ashtal rested his chin on his hands atop the desk.

“Gowen... You really lost 250 elite soldiers?” The king asked.

“My deepest apologies,” Gowen said.

Gowen ran to report to the king as soon as he could that he did not even have time to change out of his battle-worn clothes. The speed at which he returned overtook even Reshia and Gulland causing much surprise to the king.

‘The expedition has failed.’

Gowen ran back as fast as he could despite his creaking old bones just to report that message. Upon hearing it, the king immediately decided to hold a grand ceremony to receive the saint and the hero.

A hero was necessary to hide defeat.

“Gene Marlon has also been killed in action... He was a bit of an eccentric, but his skills were the real thing.”

The king became thoughtful for a moment before continuing.

“How long will recovery take?”

“2 years, Your Highness.”

“2 years... Do you think the monsters will stay put until then?”

“They can’t win a battle on the plains.”

“So, we need time then... In that case, I’ll have to appoint a new holy knight.”

He would have preferred to send his army to the forest at once, but there was much unrest to the south and north. Gene Marlon was in charge of the south. Once the various cities catches wind of his death, who knows how the enemy would move? The bandits of the snow ^{Yggdrasill}god’s mountains have also recovered during Gulland’s absence, and have recently started to become active.

The kingdom could be here today because of its strong army. If that military prowess were to weaken, the surrounding enemies would surely bare their fangs and attack. What they needed to prioritize now was not the battle with the monsters but with the other humans.

“Destruction Knight, Zelkov, Iron-Armed Knight, Gowen, Storm Knight, Gulland,” King Ashtal looked at Gowen, “Twin-Swords Knight, Vald, Decapitation Knight, Sivara, Sharp-Eyed Knight, Jize, and the late lightning-fast knight, Gene Marlon. Do you know anyone with skills equal these people?”

Gowen couldn't answer. The holy knight system was an important cornerstone in protecting the country. Each and every one of its members held power comparable to that of an entire army. Its members were both renowned and powerful, but one of those members was missing now.

Gene was in charge of the south. His absence would surely mean the worsening of the war among the various cities.

Gulland was another big name, but he was in charge of the snow god's mountains to the north, which bandits frequented. He could not leave his post unattended. And of course, neither could Gowen, as he needed to keep watch over the Forest of Darkness. The rest of the knights also had their respective missions.

“Speaking of which, that girl had a knight with her, didn't she?”

“Yes... Lili Aureya. A commoner's daughter, and an adventurer.”

“Hmm... Aureya... Aureya... huh.”

Ashtal muttered the name to himself several times before suddenly turning to look up toward the ceiling as if recalling the past.

“The saint... What do you think of that girl?”

“A wise young girl, Your Highness. Though there must be something else to her for the Ivory Tower to be so attached to her.”

The power to heal was one thing, but even that could be found after looking through a hundred people or so.

“Something else to her... I have an idea as to what that might be, so I want to do a little something as insurance.”

“Insurance, you say...”

Ashtal smiled. “I will appoint Lili Aureya as a holy knight.”

“But...”

Her name held no power, Gowen thought. And even her strength wasn’t sufficient.

“Give her ^{Vashinant} Sky Splitter, that should bring her name up to par.”

The cursed sword of the royal family, Vashinant. It was difficult to control, but whoever wielded it would surely become famous.

“Why her?”

Gowen couldn’t help but ask upon seeing how partial the king was being. If it was only as insurance, it would be enough to just capture her.

“The Aureya... I was wondering where I’d heard it before, and I remembered just now. The old blood of Aureya. A long time ago before the royal household of Germion ruled these lands, the ruler was Guansham Aureya. He wielded Vashinant in one hand and fought the forest. Theirs was a clan of swords that caused blood to rain.”

And now, 100 years later that same cursed sword would return to its rightful owner.

“Their clan collapsed 80 years ago due to problems concerning the throne’s successor, but with a crisis at hand, the cursed sword shall return to their hands. Don’t you find such a story romantic? Have her work hard. In the worst case, just 2 years will do.”

Gowen could not say anything to retort the king’s confidence.

“As the king commands...”

A few days later, Lili Aureya would be summoned by the king.

CHAPTER 98

OATH OF THE SWORD

When we arrived at the orc village, Bui came out to greet us, and I handed the spear deer over.

“Umm... Thank you,” Bui timidly said as he looked alternately between me and the speer deer. “So, to what do I owe the honor of this visit?”

All the other orcs except for Bui have locked themselves in their houses, careful not to make a single eek. They were acting as if someone troublesome had come.

Cynthia herself has started growling by my feet, but it’s really nothing to mind.

“I thought of discussing your reward for the recent battle.”

Bui looked back at me with surprise. “Oh, you don’t have to... really. We just so happened to fight with the humans, so...”

“You don’t have to be so reserved. It’s not like I plan on forcibly pushing something troublesome on you.”

“Ah, but...” Bui looked troubled.

I chuckled. “It’s not a bad thing not to have any desires, but you should at least hear me out.”

“Alright.”

“I’m thinking of giving you the land from to the south.”

“Exactly how much land are we talking about?”

Gotcha.

Originally, the area north of the lake was designated to be the orcs’, but the recent

battle has reduced the goblins' numbers. So I thought of giving the south – the village region, in other words – to the orcs.

Bui became thoughtful before speaking again. "There's something I'd like to confirm... Do you mind?"

"Go ahead."

"If you give us these lands, exactly where do you plan to hunt?"

Right... In the past, we hunted the region south of the lake to feed on giant spiders, spear deer, and double heads, but with the recent battle, I've been thinking of moving.

"We're temporarily pulling back to the Fortress of the Abyss to the west."

"Wouldn't that mean you've lost against the humans?"

There was a fervor hidden behind those words I didn't expect, causing me to be taken aback for a moment. As expected, though seemingly timid, a monster was a monster. It was almost as if he was challenging me.

"Do you plan on competing with me in place of the humans then?" I mischievously asked back, but disappointingly, Bui's shoulders quivered.

"One year."

"Excuse me?"

"When the twin moon gods appear for the 350th time, we shall once again battle the humans."

"So we are to be the breakwater until then?"

What a thoughtful orc, I thought, chuckling.

"We have a ceasefire with the humans, though I don't know how long they plan on keeping it."

Caution is necessary. There is no way the humans would merely sit idle after having

suffered so much. Right now, I need to increase the goblin population as much as I can. To that end, I will stretch out my hand to reach lands unknown, and bring to me the scattered goblins and strengthen our horde.

The humans set us back a little, but from now on, I'm going to have the goblin forces gather around the fortress.

"I will leave it to you what to do with the southern lands in our absence. You could hunt them if you so wish, or you could ignore them."

Bui became thoughtful again.

"This is the reward I give you. Whether you accept it as a reward or not, however, is up to you."

"...King of Goblins, I will accept that reward," Bui said with resolve in his eyes.

"Oh, and do tell your people not to touch the kobolds. They can be of use if you feed them."

"The kobolds? If I recall, they fought in the previous war too..."

"They are also my subordinates."

After saying what I needed to say, I carefully turned around so as to not step on Cynthia, who was playing by my feet, then I went back to the village.



When I returned, the sword god's adherent, Gi Go Amatsuki, knelt before me with a brooding face. It was almost dusk; the sun almost sunken as the arms of the night god stretched out to dye the world in his color.

"O king... Please hear my request." There was a long wound on his face from his brows to his cheeks incurred during the war.

"Speak," I said.

"I request a duel," he said.

There was no killing intent as he lay prostrated, but there was a weight behind every word spoken.

“...Very well.”

“Please wait, Your Highness! Gi Go! What are you thinking!?” The knight class, Gi Ga, asked when he heard my conversation with Gi Go as he struck out his spear before Gi Go. Killing intent filled him as he demanded Gi Go to explain himself, but the latter only looked back fearlessly. There was a pressure emanating from him that only those who have resolved themselves could give off.

“Gi Ga, it’s fine. I am the king. I must accept this challenge.”

I don’t have a great sword though, so I’ll have to make do with a decent long sword.

After swinging the long sword once, I ordered Gi Go to go all out.

“Gi Go Amatsuki! Come! Do not hesitate, lest you wish to regret this duel!”

“You don’t need to tell me!”

Gi Go brandished his curved sword and faced me. There were no openings in his stance, proving just how much his concentration and his martial strength have been tempered.

The curved sword held under his arm screamed as he ran toward me. I used my long sword as a shield in response, then I immediately took back my sword, inclined my weight forward, and then let loose a scooping slash from below. If it were a great sword in my hands instead, just the pressure behind this attack would have been enough to strike fear into him, but what I had was a dainty long sword. Pulling off such a feat was beyond its capabilities.

My sword tore through the air, but despite the setting sun’s light being barely enough to see anything past the silver light of the sword, Gi Go dodged.

A spectacular read. Predicting my attack and then dodging with the least movement, then—

He sent a blow just slightly below my sword toward my neck. With the centrifugal force empowering it, it was a decisive attack.

—GATSUN!

Our swords crossed. I took a step back and exhaled to concentrate, then as I took a step forward, so did Gi Go.

Right in that very moment where my foot was about to leave the ground, Gi Go took a step forward and slashed downwards. The speed of that sword was such that it would reach my side before I could even react!

“Let my body ^{Shield} be inviolable.”

An armor of flame burst out from ether to wrap around me, protecting me from Gi Go’s curved sword, while I swung down my sword to knock his weapon away.

“Why?” I asked with my sword pointed at the goblin.

“King, please punish me...” He desperately said.



The whispers of the sword god compelled him to fight the strong, so much so that at some point, he stopped being able to tell whether it was truly because of the sword god that he wished to fight or simply because he himself desired it.

Not a day passed where he could not hear the sound of swords clashing. He even started to feel like his very life lived within his curved sword. And as sounds of blood spilling resounded, a voice echoed within, saying—

‘Cut down the strong’.

‘With these arms, these hands, these fingers... Cut them down!’

‘Even if you lose your arms! Your eyes! Your legs! Even if you lose your life!!’

‘If you lose you arms, swing your sword with your mouth!’

'If you lose your eyes, listen closely with your ears!'

'If one of your legs is crushed, cut it off!'

'If your chest is pierced, cut the enemy down before you die!'

Like that the sword god slowly took Gi Go's consciousness away and made him swing his sword.

Cut, cut, cut cut cut CuT CuT CuT CUT CUT CUT *Cut* CUTTTttt!!

That voice seemed to resound even in the very breath he breathed. Gi Go looked at the king half-dazed.

"I request a duel."

Before he knew it, he had challenged the king.

For the first time, he realized just how terrifying the king was.

The king was truly overwhelming, enough to make him imagine that what was before him was actually a mountain. Even though the king was not using a great sword, the pressure the king emanated was still beyond his imagination.

Dodging the king's sword with the least movements and feeling the erupting wind from the king's sword filled him with joy.

The sound of swords clashing called forth both fear and joy within him.

Our king... Illuminates the path and leads us to a brighter tomorrow; an existence like no other.

And yet I pointed my sword at him...

I have sinned...

But there was no doubt that the simple joy of battling the strong filled him.

The two conflicting emotions stirred him up from within.

He was going mad. Gi Go smiled each time he thought of it.

He was losing his mind over his sword.

When the king showed an opening, he unleashed his blade.

—Reach him!

Only to reach a wall of black flames. The flames of the underworld protect the king.

As the king's sword descended, his curved sword fell and cracked.

When he came to, the king's sword was pointed at him.

Gi Go himself knew that he had committed a grave sin. Hence, he would voice no complaints even if the king punished him there and then.

“Why?” The king asked.

But Gi Go could do no more than lower his head as much as he could.

“King, please punish me...”

The great king would not run from any challengers. And with his great heart, he would surely forgive him. The fact he asked for an explanation was proof of that.

But he could not ask to be forgiven. If he did, his sins would never be cleared. And if he were to commit the same sin a second time, he would not be able to forgive himself, not even if the king forgave him.

When that time comes I will cut my own neck!

“Explain yourself.”

Gi Go froze. He could not lie. If he was asked to explain himself, he would have no choice but to answer.

“...I have lost myself to the power within me. Please exact judgment, My King.”

Gi Go bowed as if offering his neck.

“...I knew you were struggling with the divine protection you received. I acted dumb precisely because it was a battle against yourself. Gi Go, a swordsman of my goblins, I pass judgment as your king.”

Silenced filled the area as Gi Go waited for his punishment.

“You shall not kill until the appointed day. This shall be your punishment, Gi Go Amatsuki.”

A vow not to kill.

“I swear on my life, I shall not kill until the appointed day.”

His head rubbed against the ground as an oath to the king was sealed.



“Umm... Is there something you need?” Yoshu asked.

After I ordered everyone else to leave, the only ones left in the room were me and Yoshu.

“I have a request.”

Yoshu listened carefully, and I continued.

“Go with Gi Go for a year.”

“Huh? But Mr. Gi Go is...”

“Yes, I let him off with an oath not to kill. But whether *that* would stay put or not here is another question.”

Gi Go will probably leave the village. I didn’t expect the sword god’s whispers to affect him so much that he would point his sword at me.

“...So, in other words, you plan to use me to fetter him?”

I smiled at that. As I thought, Shumea’s younger brother is sharp. He’s always with his sister, but normally, former slaves tend to have cold and callous personalities.

“Exactly.”

“If I refuse...”

“You want to know?”

For just a moment, Yoshu looked at me with a sharp gaze, but then he breathed a sigh.

“...No. Please take care of my older sister. I will surely return after a year. If I find out something has happened to my sister’s body then, I’ll be sure to chase you until the ends of the earth.”

Fire burned within his eyes as he said that. As expected of someone who has received the flame god’s divine protection, who is a member of the fire god’s household.

I returned that gaze as I struck my long sword into the ground.

“I swear it on the king’s honor.”

Yoshu sighed deeply.

“...I’ll be leaving immediately then. Please take care of my sister, and Ms. Selena.”

“Tell that one yourself too.”

“Alright.”

“Don’t you have anything to say to your sister?”

“Tell her I’ll definitely come back alive.”

“Sure.”

As I watched Yoshu run off, I thought of Gi Go who was walking far away in the embrace of the night god.



Gi Go took only his curved sword with him as he left the village. The king had forgiven him, but he couldn't forgive himself.

He couldn't stay in this village. Not until he could bring the sword god's temptations under control.

He would bet his very pride to find a way to.

When he touched the curved sword hanging from his waist, he could hear the sword god's whispers, but it was distant now, most likely because of his oath to the king.

The night was quiet. When he thought about it, it's been a long time since he was last alone. He hadn't been alone since the king picked him up.

The loyal Gi Ga, the wise Gi Gu who could use other goblins well, and although annoying, the knowledgeable Gi Za. With them around, the village should be fine.

But what the king yearned for was a distant dream. A great ambition.

Gi Go decided to use his life to realize that dream. He couldn't waste around idly.

Hence he would temper his sword, and then return to the king.

"Mr. Gi Go!"

The sound of footsteps and a human's voice.

"You're..."

"It's Yoshu. The king's guest, Yoshu."

"Why are you here?"

"I have a message from the king."

“...From the king?”

When Gi Go heard that, he knelt down on one knee as he bowed his head, while his hand firmly gripped his sword. It was as if he would not miss even a single word.

“H-Hang on!”

“A message from the king must be properly heard.”

“It’s kinda embarrassing though... Anyway...” Yoshu cleared his throat, and then ruminated on the king’s words.

“Temper your sword until the day we meet again! May the fortunes of war be with you!”

Gi Go’s shoulders shook as he held his sword’s hilt seemingly tight enough to break it.

“That’s it... Oh, and by the way, the king told me to go with you.”

The king’s words continued to affect Gi Go for some time.

After a while, he looked up to the starry sky on the night god, then he turned to the village and bowed.

And then... he set off.



Gi Go Amatsuki

Abnormal Status: **Sworn to Spare** added.

Abnormal Status: The effects of the sword god on sanity have worsened.

The title **Subleader** has changed to **Wandering Swordsman**

CHAPTER 99

OBJECTIVES

It's been two days since Gi Go Amatsuki left the village. The assassin, Gi Ji Arsil, strongly advised to chase after him, but I chose to leave the goblin be and begin our move to the west instead.

We took the carts we recovered from the humans, and disassembled them to create palanquins to be carried by four normal goblins, allowing easier transportation for the pregnant and younger goblins. Our destination was the Fortress of the Abyss.

When the ancient beast tamer, Gi Gi Orudo, and the shaman, Gi Ga Zakuend, saw the carts a heated debate took place.

The topic was: What is this object?

The goblins could not imagine the use of carts to carry goods and commodities, as the forest did not have uniformly level ground. When Gi Gi noted the wheels attached to the carts, he thought them similar to the moons. And so, he concluded: Ah, this must be an idol! An idol made in the image of the moons!

"But if these are idols, how do the humans use them to worship?" Gi Za asked.

Gi Gi quickly found an answer to Gi Za's question. He took one of his wild dogs and placed it on the other end of the cart, while he positioned himself next to the other end... And then he jumped on the cart, lifting the dog, sending it flying into the sky.

"Woooooof!?" the dog pitifully cried until it eventually landed on a tree. Upon landing, the branches broke, and it screamed even more, and when it hit the ground, it fainted.

Must've been scary.

"This is how they send offerings to the moons!"

He was wrong, but Gi Gi's short demonstration was able to convince Gi Ji Arsil and Gi Zu Ruo.

In the blink of an eye, the heated debate reached a boiling point. It was then that Shumea happened to be passing by.

“Or you know what! How about we just ask Lord Shumea!” Gi Do said.

The clamoring goblins all looked at each other, and then with a nod, they surrounded the human female. The pressure emanating from the debater goblins caused even the usually cool Shumea to wince.

“Lord Shumea, tell us! What is that thing!? Is it an idol or a moving shield!?” Gi Za asked.

“Umm... It’s a cart used to transport stuff? Is something the matter?”

Contrast the goblins’ zealous questioning, Shumea’s answer was so matter-of-factly that it was like pouring cold water over fire. The goblins went completely silent.

I wasn’t intending to make fun of them, but when I saw Gi Za and Gi Gi unable to look each other in the eye, I broke out laughing.

“K-King... Could it be... You knew?” Gi Za bitterly asked.

“Rather than waste your time on petty things, you should hurry up and prepare,” I said to forcefully steer the topic away.

Well, it’s good to find new things to be interested with.



Along the way I pondered over our future actions.

Our biggest objective currently is to strengthen and expand the horde. I need to amass hordes of goblin warriors in order to take Reshia back with these two hands, then I need to take a country to set a foothold for us in the world of humans.

The question then is how.

The goblin race has great diversity and is the second most populous race after the

humans. I checked this with Shumea, and it seems to hold true. Moreover, as far as adventurers and battle slaves are concerned, the goblins are considered to be weak and common, the kind of monster you could see anywhere.

Where there are humans, there are goblins.

If so, then there should be many more hordes of goblins in the forest... Even in the plains where the humans rule, or to the west beyond the Forest of the Abyss, or to the south, past the village, or even to the north, beyond the orc village; where there is land untrodden, unknown goblins may lurk.

Gathering all of these goblins by myself is out of the question. Who knows how long it would take me to accomplish such a feat alone? Hence, I should make use of the more highly evolved goblins among my ranks to bring those goblins to me. If they fail... The female goblins are with me. Even in the worst case, we won't be wiped out.

In an area two days away from the village, I had Gi Gu Verbena summoned.

"Gi Gu Verbena, you are aware that Gi Go has left the village?"

"...Yes, Your Highness, but I am fully confident that he holds no desire to incite a rebellion."

"I know. He is not that sort of person," generously nodded.

Being Gi Go's rival, it seems he understands him quite well.

"I shall send you as my representative."

"Please enlighten me, Your Highness."

"You are to go to the south. There you shall take the local goblins and bring them before me."

I have given the noble goblins the right to have a household. Right now, I am telling him to exercise that right.

Gi Gu Verbena seems to have understood that, as he tightly held the sword sheathed by his waist and bowed his head deeply.

"I will not fail you, my king."

"May the fortunes of war be with you."

"Ha!"

Then he turned around and left with the speed of a beast.

"Because I can't go, right?" Gi Za asked from behind me.

"You and Gi Ga are as stubborn as rocks after all," I sarcastically laughed, at which he too laughed.

The next day I sent Gi Gi Orudo to the north and Gi Zu Ruo to the south-west.

After that we finally arrived at the Fortress of the Abyss.

"Welcome home, Your Majesty!" Kuzan of Gordob said as she prostrated her small, white body before me.

"Did anything happen while I was gone?"

"Nope! I cleaned the place up too."

That's not really it, but alright, it seems nothing is amiss.

"These are the goblins of Eastern Village. Assign them rooms to sleep in."

"Please leave it to me!"

As Kuzan was counting the goblins, she noted the elf, Selena's, presence.

"There's actually a small ^{Koro Toku} cave dweller in a place like this?" Selena said in surprise, while Kuzan looked back with confusion.

"Koro toku? I am Kuzan of Gordob... You are a wind ^{Sylph} elf, yes?"

“My apologies, Lord Kuzan,” Gi Za interjected, “I have a prior engagement with this elf. There is still much to learn regarding the elf’s knowledge on magic. If you have business with her, please settle it later.”

Selena immediately hid behind Shumea when Gi Za appeared, while Kuzan ran off to count the rest of the horde.



After word had been sent that the various representatives of the four tribes had all returned safely, a banquet was held. By the time the banquet had ended, Kuzan also finished assigning rooms to the goblins, while the goblins who were seeing the fortress for the first time finally managed to wake themselves up from the surprise.

It was during that time that I called Selena and Shumea over. I only had business with Selena, but I called the both of them since Selena would probably have reservations about coming alone.

“Boss, you needed something?” Shumea asked.

Selena was hiding behind Shumea as always when they entered.

I know I’m scary, but can’t she get over it already?

The image of a certain girl flashed through my mind. It did not take long for her to grow accustomed to me. That didn’t change even when I evolved. For a moment, I felt my chest ache.

No... Don’t think about her.

Shaking those thoughts away, I spoke to my two guests. “Yes, my apologies for calling you at such a time... There’s something I want to know about the elves.”

“Oh, if it’s something like that, then...” Shumea said.

“Right, if it’s something like that, count me in too,” Gi Za suddenly entered the room.

Where the hell did *you* come from? The two girls’ looks seemed so say as they watched Gi Za leisurely take a seat beside me.

“Well, go on. Speak!” Gi Za excitedly said like a kid about to go on a trip.

Chuckling, I prompted Shumea and Selena to start.

According to legends of old passed down among the elves of the wind, the sylphs, the gods followed after Deetna to create the various races.

The god of forest, Chenzhen, and the god of water, Iren, created the elves.

The god of wind, Castor, and the god of earth, Nmaro, sculpted the demihumans out of the ores.

The god of illusions, Famil, and the god of dreams, Jeje, weaved dreams and illusions together to create the dragons.

The god of starfaring, Tear, traveled the stars and gathered ingredients to create the giants.

Like that the various races were created.

Shumea and Selena were wide-eyed as I spoke. It seems they didn’t expect a goblin like myself to be capable of speaking such things.

“Didn’t your mother tell you it’s rude to leave your mouth open?”

Selena promptly shut her jaws closed.

“Wow, boss, I really didn’t expect a goblin such as yourself to know such things...” Shumea said as she scratched her head, seemingly still shocked.

Well, normally that would be the case.

“Anyway, let’s hear it.”

Selena turned to Shumea with a troubled look, while the latter patted her on the back while reassuring her that it was alright.

Selena nervously started to talk, and Gi Za and I listened with rapt attention.

The beings known as elves were largely divided into four types. Each type was given a name according to the spirit they were associated with. The fire elves: the salamanders, the water elves: the undines, the earth elves: the gnomes, and the wind elves: the sylphs. The most influential of the elves were the undines, who worshiped the water goddess, followed by the gnome and sylphs. Last were the salamanders, who were strong individually but few in number.

Selena herself did not know much about the other elves. The sylphs lived with the forest and died with the forest. This has been their way of life since long ago. To play with the wind and die under the blessings of the forest was the greatest happiness any sylph could ask for.

The sylphs either worshiped the god of wind, Castor, or the god of forest, Chenzhen. They were long-lived, but it was at most only twice a human's life. Supposedly, there were those who lived three times as long as humans, but Selena did not know any such sylph.

The sylphs were mostly hunters, but unlike the goblins, they hunted with their bows and offered prayers before eating to purify the meat.

Like joining your hands together to say grace?

The sylphs mostly married among themselves and rarely interfered with the other elves.

I quietly listened while Gi Za would ask questions from time to time.

Selena talked endlessly even as the dawn approached.

Tl Note: Aight, I changed everything back to elf. I honestly have no idea whether all these gnome, undine... etc. are supposed to be elves, but when I take away my preconceptions about elves, that's what the text seems to say, so let's just go with that.

For a more technical explanation: The author gave 妖精族 (sprite/fairy/elf) the エルフ (Elf) reading, so 妖精族 should be read as elf. 風の妖精族 was given the シルフ (Sylph) reading, but the words that compose it can be read as wind sprite or wind elf.

If we just use the given reading for 妖精族, however, it suggests wind elf. When you look at it this way, it seems obvious, but I just really find it hard to reconcile gnomes, undines... etc. with elves. Anyway, let's just go with this, as I can't afford to read the whole book right now to figure out if my conjectures are correct.

CHAPTER 100

A CERTAIN PARTING

Status	
Race	Goblin
Level	36
Class	King; Ruler
Possessed Skills	Ruler of the Demon Children of Chaos; Defiant Soul; World Devouring Howl; Sword Mastery A-; Dominator; King's Soul; Ruler's Wisdom III; Household of the Gods; One-Eyed Snake's Evil Eye; The King's Dance at the Edge of Death; Magic Manipulation; Soul of the Berserk King; Third Impact (The Third Chant); Instinct; Blessing of the Underworld Goddess
Divine Protection	Goddess of the Underworld (Altesia)
Attributes	Darkness; Death
Subordinate Beasts	High Kobold Hasu (Lv77); Gastra (Lv20); Cynthia (Lv20); Orc King (Bui) (Lv82)
Abnormal Status	Blessing of the One-Eyed Snake; Protection of the Twin-Headed Snake

"Do you want to go home?" I asked.

Shumea and Gi Za turned to me with reproach in their eyes. In Gi Za's case, it was probably because he would be troubled by the elf's absence, while in Shumea's, it was most likely because she thought I was only teasing her.

"Will you let me go home?" Selena asked with fear.

I nodded. "When the time comes. I need a contact to reach out to the elves after all."

That wasn't a lie. The goblins weren't enough to take over the world. It's not enough even with Bui's orcs and Hasu's kobolds.

To win against the humans, I need to gather the power of many races. The sylph with

their masterful archery is one such race. I need them, but there's no need to antagonize them.

Should they get in my way, however, I won't mind forcefully annexing them into my kingdom. Everything will depend on how the sylphs react.

"Goblin boss, you sure are big-hearted," Shumea said.

"Are you sure you haven't simply forgotten your place?" I said back.

Shumea wryly smiled and scratched her head. "Well, if you put it that way..."

"Umm... T-Thank you," Selene sheepishly said.

"It's nothing to be grateful about."

Everything depends on how the sylphs respond. There's no reason to thank me.

After that Selena talked about the particularities of the sylph's lifestyle.

She talked about playing with the small ^{koro} people, about eating the edible plants near her village, and about the other elves her age.

The thing that caught my attention the most were the small ^{koro dwarves} metal workers. They dug out holes to live in and were skilled in smithing and other industrial arts. The elves often traded elven liquor in exchange for their arrows and knives.

"How many of those koro dwarves are there?"

"Oh, they're everywhere," Selena said with a rare smile.

I inadvertently raised my brows at that. Her smile was beautiful, like the blooming of a flower, but I can't believe she's still answering so vaguely. It's not actually that much of an issue, but it really slows down the conversation. Not to mention, I can't follow up on this right now. If the other sylphs found out that I'm interested, they might use it to their advantage.

I asked a different question.

Apparently, the sylphs prefer to isolate themselves in various forests and build villages for themselves. They rarely interfered in matters of the world outside. They truly believed that there was no greater happiness than being in the forest.

But there were exceptions, and some of them would choose to live alongside the humans as adventurers.

When the discussion reached this point, Shumea spoke. "I've heard of some of those. There's the King of Bows, Feeney, from the Blood Oath of the ^{Fairy Clan} Moon Flower, Five-Bow Shuen from the Holy Shushunu Kingdom to the east, and although not an archer, there's also the salamander, Barui."

Sylph happily added. "Feeney and Mr. Shuen are both sylphs. Mr. Barui is probably a salamander. But regardless, they all went out into the world over 30 years ago. They're amazing people!"

The Five-Bow apparently refers to the top five bow users in the Holy Shushunu Kingdom.

"So, why did you end up a slave then? Weren't the sylphs supposed to be happy living in the forest?" I asked.

Apparently, it wasn't a pleasant topic for the sylph, as Selena's shoulders immediately dropped. Shumea's glare was pretty painful, but I ignored it and implored Selena to speak.

"...I've always looked up to the world outside. In the forest there's no need to worry about food and other basic needs, but..."

When Selena went silent, Shumea consoled her with a hug.

"...A long time ago, someone told me this, 'This place has everything... Everything except freedom'. That person left the village, and I never got to meet her again, but it was meeting her that made me want to see the world outside. I couldn't understand what this 'freedom' she kept talking about was, but she dreamed of it. I wanted to understand what that 'freedom' she yearned for was, so I left the village." Shumea said with tears in her eyes.

“And then you got caught by an evil slave trader?” Gi Za said, at which Selena tearfully nodded.

“Freedom, huh. Well... It’s good to be able to do as you please.” The former slave, Shumea, wryly smiled as she rubbed the back of her neck where her collar used to be. All her life she’s been thrown around by others. Who knows how mentally painful it is to realize not even your own life belongs to you.

My Defiant Soul ached within me. How many have been tortured with that pain? It doesn’t matter whether it’s the gods or the powerful humans. Such an act is unforgivable.

“I see... So that’s how you ended up a slave.”

“Cheer up, alright? If I ever meet that person, I’ll tell her you’re doing well. So, what’s her name?”

“Thank you... That person’s name is... Pale. Pale ^{Symphoria} Tranquil Forest.”



The main street, where the mainstream stores were lined up, was hustling and bustling as always. In the alley, a short walk away from the main street, was the corner taken up by the slave traders.

Today, one of the imperial guards, Yuza, was out on a patrol with the lowborn soldiers.

“Damn it!”

Lately, his temper had been getting worse to the point that it seemed to be boiling over almost everyday. The increase in adventurers had led to an increase in disputes and fighting, but his superior, the commander of the imperial guards, was an unreliable sham who couldn’t do anything past flatter the government officials.

The increase in adventurers wasn’t all a bad thing, however, as their expansion would mean less monsters in the forest.

—There are too many muscle-brained thugs! What a waste! If you have the strength to make trouble, use it in the forest!

Yuza spat curses in his mind as he quickened his pace. He ran past the main street into the alley.

“Why are adventurers such a pain!? And why do they always cause trouble along my route!?”

The moment Yuza entered the alley, where barely anyone could hear him, he opened the lid on his seething rage, and started cursing out loud. His subordinates seemed used to his antics already, as they only looked at each other and wryly smiled.

“Because of you I had to give up my day off! Because of you my beloved Shifa was saddened! She even started to grumble saying, ‘Work Again?’ All because of you!”

Yuza’s serious vice-captain did not bother interacting with him as he went on his rampage.

Speaking of which, Shifa was referring to Yuza’s only four-year-old daughter. Yuza’s vice-captain had already grown calluses on his ear listening to Yuza’s complaints whenever they went out to drink. When he thought of Yuza’s daughter, he thought of how adorable the little girl was.

“We should quickly wrap this up then. Your adorable Shifa is waiting for you after all,” Yuza’s vice-captain said.

“Bastard, are you aiming for my daughter! I’m not giving her to you! I absolutely won’t! ...Damn it, I can’t believe the other guards actually think the adventurers are too hard to handle!”

Naturally, Yuza’s vice-captain couldn’t actually hate or like a four-year-old kid.

Except for Yuza’s complaints and needless affection over his daughter, he was actually a pretty good boss.

He had a strong sense of righteousness, he didn’t accept bribes, and he always stood in front of the lowborn soldiers when entering a scene.

All humans had faults. Yuza's vice-captain wryly smiled as he thought that, then he turned his focus back to his boss.

"The disturbance is up ahead," Yuza's vice-captain said.

"Good! Let's get this over with quickly. You have permission to use your sword depending on the situation, so go ahead and unfasten those clasps now."

The soldiers looked at each other. The use of swords was strictly regulated. Misuse would be met with a heavy punishment.

The fact that they were given permission to use their swords meant that the situation was that dangerous. Still... it was best to be cautious.

"Is that alright?"

"Think ahead. Even the onlookers are probably equipped! But, listen! Although I told you to ready yourselves, you are absolutely not to unsheathe your weapons until I give the signal to!"

Although the man grumbled a lot, there was no doubting his skill. Inadvertently, Yuza's vice-captain gripped his club tight.

"Your response!?"

"Ha! All men, ready your weapons!"

At the vice-captain's command, all the guards unfastened the clasp on their weapons.

"Imperial Guards! Clear the area!" Yuza said.

The onlookers all winced when he said that.

The alley was a place that attracted the sort of people who would handle slaves. The people whose legs were wounded here was not limited to just one or two.

Yuza and his men passed through the alley and entered a certain slave shop.



Some time earlier inside the same slave shop.

The slave trader had a complacent smile plastered on his face as he eyed the customer. His long years as a slave trader had given him a kind of skill that allowed him to see the value of his customers. The customer today was a big one.

From what he's gathered, the people before him were members of a famous clan.

"Dear customers from Soar to ^{Elks} Freedom, is there anything that's caught your fancy?"

The slave trader couldn't be happier. Rich customers have been visiting him one after another. Just a few days ago, that holy knight, Gene, paid big bucks for three slaves. And today, he was going to strike it rich again. He was the luckiest man in the world, he thought. The joy filling him made him unable to contain his laughter.

"Are your human slaves all like these?"

As the customers were a clan from the distant east, there was no way they would know of the market price. It shouldn't matter even if he overcharged them a bit, the slave trader thought as he flicked his abacus.

—Do they prefer demihumans?

The slave trader nodded. "The castle has been pressuring us a lot lately."

Slaves usually came either as a result of battle or as a means to pay one's debt. The better the quality, the more expensive the slaves were. Of course, there were also slaves who became slaves as punishment for their crimes.

The slave trader's tongue fluently moved as he negotiated.

"...I'm looking for an elven girl. Her name is Selena," said a beautiful elf who stepped out from the crowd of adventurers.

Her bountiful golden hair gathered into a single stream behind her, and on her back could be seen a bow that had been clearly used for a long time. Her pair of emerald

eyes were filled with much sorrow even as she spoke. This elf was indeed none other than Pale Symphoria.

Although the slave trader had handled many elves before, the elf before him was so beautiful he actually gasped.

“Oi, you gonna talk or what? The princess is asking,” a scoundrel-looking man said from the side.

The slave trader was so enchanted that it wasn’t until the scoundrel-looking man had taken him by the collar that he finally awoke.

“T... There’s no elf here by that name.”

The moment the slave trader said that, the scoundrel-looking man hit him.

“Ryutanu, there’s no need to be so rough,” Pale said.

“Don’t worry. I know what I’m doing,” Ryutanu gently laughed, then he turned his gaze to the slave trader.

His sharp gaze weighed heavily on the poor slave trader.

“Leader, I’m gonna have a man-to-man talk with this guy, so... Can you give us some space?”

The young man Ryutanu referred to as ‘leader’ heaved a sigh, and then he left through the back with Pale.

“Leader, Mr. Ryutanu...”

“Think about how he feels too... Besides, weren’t you intending to leave the clan?”

Pale tried to argue, but the man called leader shut her down.

“That guy feels indebted to you, so...”

It was almost time for the seasons to change in the capital. The rainy clouds that appeared to block the sun were proof of that.

“But...” Pale tried to argue when Ryutanu came out.

“Leader,” he said, stopping Pale from saying anything further, “it seems she was sold to the holy knight called Gene.”

When the young man called ‘leader’ heard that, he frowned.

“Gene... That’s the guy who died in the forest, right?”

“...So she’s missing,” Pale muttered. Gradually, panic began to appear on her face.

“Princess, this...”

“Pale.”

The leader and Ryutanu looked at each other.

“I... I think I’ll go back to the forest... to my hometown,” Pale said.

“...That would be best,” the leader said, at which Ryutanu nodded.

They could come with her too if they so wished, but doing so would mean abandoning everything they’ve built up in the east. They would have to start again here in the west. They understood this, but after having been together for so long, watching the elf leave made the clan feel so much smaller.

“Princess, thank you for everything.”

Ryutanu bowed to the elf, and then quickly ran back to the store.

“A farewell gift,” Pale said.

The bag she handed over was clearly full of gold coins.

“I don’t need this,” the leader said, “it was thanks to you that our clan grew from that tiny group to become something everyone in the east knew. We were just a group of thugs, but just as the name of our clan says, we were able to free ourselves to reach a land unknown, becoming pioneers. We couldn’t be here today if it weren’t for you.”

Ah, so these are parting words, Pale thought as she looked down.

“The truth is we should be the ones helping you. We should be coming here with you to help reclaim the forest, but...”

“The issue with the red king can’t be avoided... I know.”

A battle between clans to be first. Pale’s absence would greatly hurt their clan, but they still sent her off without any malice. For that she was grateful.

“You have money now, so at least you won’t end up like you did before,” the leader said.

The man chuckled at that, and she too laughed. When she first left the forest, she got lost in the crowd of humans, and she ended up in the alley with a group of scoundrels. The ones who saved her then were the members of Elks.

From then on they gradually gathered members to turn that small clan into the clan it was today. Memories flashed before them as they said their farewells. There were times when it was painful, and times when it was sad, but in the end, it was a happy memory.

“Goodbye, Pale Symphoria of the Quiet Moon.”

“Farewell, “First Wing”, Touri Nokia.”

The two bumped their fists and then parted.

The leader, Touri, expelled all thoughts of the girl disappearing into the crowd of people, then he went back to the store. Ryutanu was currently being questioned by the imperial guards.

“Damn it... I guess we’ll be eating behind bars for a while.”

But if it meant ridding himself of the sorrow lurking in his heart, he might as well go wild.

CHAPTER 101

TWO HOMESICK GOBLINS

Humans tended to work in the morning; that was the natural order for them. But for goblins, there was no such thing. Their eyes worked well whether it was night or day, the druids' magic was at its full strength during the hour of the night god, and yet the goblins were neither nocturnal nor diurnal.

What was the job of the king?

The goblin lifestyle meant there was no given time for their activities. They moved about without regard for the sun or the twin moons. Because of that food was extremely important.

In the western part of the Forest of Darkness were the villages of the goblin tribes. If these villages were to fall, everything would be for naught, so it could be said that these villages were the most important part of my plans for expansion. Because of that I decided to note the villages' location as the point from which we would be expanding to all directions.

To the east were the Gi Village and the humans. To the west were untrodden lands. To the north, beyond the kobold village, were lands unknown, and to the south were the vast plains and the Paradua village. The area around us is mostly unexplored except for those parts under the control of the tribes.

The goblins were not capable of making maps. Just in case, I asked Shumea, and it seems she too did not have such an ability.

Shouldn't have gotten my hopes up, I thought. Seriously, why am I surrounded by muscle-brains everywhere.

It was necessary to go to the actual place to understand the area. Images or symbols could be use to draw the map, even stones would work, it didn't really matter. Like that I left the fortress to explore the surrounding area.

I took some of the goblins along so we can hunt along the way, while I left the knight-

class goblin, Gi Ga, to defend the fortress.

We had normal goblins with us, so I had goblins with high leadership skills like Gi Jii lead the exploration groups.

As one might expect, the bigger prey really stood out, like the deer called big horn, or the long-legged spiders known as Annie Spider, or the big caterpillars referred to as Green Caterpillar. They were virtually limitless. Their bodies were big and it took some time to take them down, but it wasn't an impossible task.

Once we learned the traits of the monsters, we'll be able to use traps during hunts.

After we hunted enough, I climbed up a tree to get a good view of the surrounding area.

How level was the ground? Was there water nearby? Where were the plains? Where would be the best place to attack the humans? Where would traps be most unlikely to hurt our allies?

Trees covered the land, but by looking down from a higher point it was possible to understand the terrain. It was hard work, and the goblins following me could not understand the meaning behind such careful study of the terrain. Even the most evolved of them, Gi Jii, a rare class goblin, could not fathom my actions.

When the sun was about to set, I concluded our exploration, and went back to the fortress, where we ate our spoils. I listened to the old goblin's report regarding the newly born goblins as I ate.

"More and more females are being born ever since coming here," the old goblin said.

That was something to celebrate. The more females there were, the more goblins there would be in time. According to the old goblin, previously, only 1 out of 10 would be born female, but ever since coming here, females were being born twice as fast.

Was this also because of the fortress?

I don't know whether this is a result of the twin-headed snake's blessing, but it's a good thing. There are 340 days left until the battle with the humans.

Until then just how much more could we increase our numbers? That was not a problem only for the females but also for our food supply.



“I have returned,” Gilmi announced.

It wasn’t until two days after the king returned to the fortress that Gilmi managed to make his way back to the Unknown Forest, where the village of Ganra was.

“I’ve been waiting,” Princess Narsa said, “welcome home.”

Gilmi showed a look of relief when he heard Princess Narsa’s voice.

“Uh huh.”

“Good grief, the young ones sure like to make their elders wait.”

When he heard Rashka and Aluhaliha’s voice next, he frowned.

“I’ve returned, chief. It is good to see you well. Unfortunate, however, that these two seem to be doing well too.”

Although Gilmi was knelt before Narsa, the words that came out of his lips made her face stiffen for a moment.

“Hmph, good guts.”

“Gotten quite daring, haven’t we?”

Aluhaliha and Rashka both wryly smiled.

The long struggle between them has made it difficult for them to act cordially. They could not honestly express their happiness for each other’s well being. Well, Narsa thought, it should be fine as long as they work on that from here on.

“So, why have the two of you come?” Gilmi asked as he stood beside Narsa.

“Right, I’ll get straight to the point,” Rashka said, “what do you think the king is

planning?”

The frankness of that question caused Aluhaliha to lightly click his tongue, while Gilmi ended up raising his brows.

“What do you mean by that?” Gilmi asked.

“Continuing the battle any further would have been difficult. That I understand, but what about after? Lord Gi Go has left, and many more have been sent to distant lands.” It was the experienced Aluhaliha who spoke this time.

Although Hal was the current chieftain of Paradua, he still gave a report to Aluhaliha, and Aluhaliha could not understand the king’s intentions.

The reason they had gathered here today was to understand the king’s intentions. They thought it would be best to hear Gilmi’s thoughts, as he was the closest to the king.

“Is there a problem?” Gilmi asked.

“There is,” Rashka said, “sometimes the king would do things I cannot comprehend, but is that really all there is?”

“To comprehend the king’s objectives and work to realize them is the making of a true retainer,” he continued.

Gilmi was shocked. This proud goblin was actually saying he would work for the king.

“I need the king in good health until the day of our rematch. Otherwise, there would be no meaning in challenging him,” Rashka said with a huge smile.

For some reason, those words allowed Gilmi to come to terms with the proud goblin working for the king.

When he looked at Narsa, their eyes met.

“...The king wishes to find new subordinates. Lord Gi Gu and the others have been sent to look for such people.”

Rashka was puzzled when he heard those words.

“Does that mean he doesn’t trust us?” Aluhaliha asked.

Gilmi shook his head. “No, rather, it seems he’s preparing for the next war. The next war will probably be with the humans again.”

“Those humans were certainly strong,” Raskha said.

Aluhaliha became thoughtful, then bitterly said. “That kid Hal came back wounded too. It wasn’t a bad thing since it seems to have made him manlier, but... I see, so it was a difficult battle, huh.”

Gilmi spoke. “Are you not satisfied even with Paradua’s name being glorified?”

“There’s no point if we’re no use to the king,” Aluhaliha curtly said.

“The king was happy though.”

“Hmm, that’s good, I suppose.”

The topic digressed a bit, so Narsa brought it back on course. “It seems the king wishes for a stronger army. Can we be certain he doesn’t think we’re unneeded?”

“Of course, after all the expansion of the army will serve as a foundation for our country,” Gilmi said.

“I see,” Narsa nodded.

Narsa, Rashka, and Aluhaliha all pondered on the matter on their own, then Rashka stood up.

“Gaidga will give birth to many children.”

It was the chief of Gaidga, Rashka’s, simple conclusion.

“Ever since the ogres disappeared, the miasma leaking from the Forest of the Abyss has lessened. As a result, beasts to prey upon have returned, and our rider-beasts have ceased starving. We owe much to the king. Therefore, Paradua shall thoroughly

temper all of its warriors so that they all grow to become great warriors.” Aluhaliha smiled like the devil as he thought of the grueling training he would put the Paradua through.

“Ganra... shall work on its skills,” Narsa said.

Aluhaliha and Rashka turned to Narsa with admiration.

“We neither have a strong body like the Gaidga nor mobility like those of Paradua with their rider-beasts. What we do have is the skill to work with stones and carve out things from trees. The skill to craft things. Therefore, we shall work to create new weapons and armor for those who have yet to be born. Our craft shall be their strength.”

“And I thought you were just a lass, not bad,” Aluhaliha chuckled.

Rashka on the other hand was shocked. “Indeed, if it’s Ganra, it should be possible. No, it’s possible precisely because it’s Ganra.”

Like this the tribes decided how they would support the king on his path to world domination.

After the two chieftains left, Gilmi and Narsa went to see the large tree where they frequently played as children.

“Your answer just now... about how Ganra was to move was spectacular, chief,” Gilmi said.

“I had a lot of time to think on it. I watched the Ganra, the Gaidga, the Paradua, and even the Gi Village... I guess you could say I learned a lot,” Narsa said.

“You’ve grown up to be a splendid chief. I guess I won’t be calling you a little girl again.”

“Oh, you. Stop it, it’s embarrassing... By the way, I heard the king gave you a last name.”

“Yes... With it the relationship between Ganra and the Gi Village will become even stronger.”

“In other words, the Ganra tribe is safer than ever... Hey, Gilmi, are you sure you’re not

pushing yourself?”

“I’m sure there’s no such...”

But there was a sadness to his gaze as he knelt on the ground. Narsa saw that despite the dark of the night.

“Ra Gilmi Fishiga... huh. You’re amazing, you know. You’ve been moving further and further, all on your own. No one from the four tribes can even look down on you anymore. Everyone looks up to you now... as the ^{Gadieta} First Archer, as my father’s successor, as someone who brought together the tribes...”

“It’s still not enough to repay Master Gilan.”

“I feel like you’ve gotten somewhere far away... somewhere where I can’t reach you anymore. Gilmi... don’t push yourself too much. Without you, I...”

Narsa didn’t say the end of that sentence, and neither did Gilmi ask. The two goblins stood there under the large tree as they reminisced on their childhood days.



In the outskirts of the vast capital.

Today, Reshia had received permission and gone into town with Lili. She wore a hood over her face, making it impossible to tell that it was the holy saint herself who was walking out in the streets. With the adventurer, Lili, by her side, at most, passersby would simply take her for the young lady of a merchant family.

They bought bags of sweets from the food stalls along the crowded street. They each carried half of the luggage, though Lili argued she should carry everything. Unfortunately, doing so would garner them the wrong kind of attention, so Lili had no choice but to acquiesce. The place they were headed to was the slums, a district where the poor lived. In a place like that where the public order was poor, Reshia had more say than Lili.

Once there, they headed for the orphanage that took in abandoned children. When they opened the door of the already crumbling orphanage, a wooden rod came

swinging at them, but they easily dodged it, and the kid that swung it tripped on himself.

“Your manners sure have gotten worse, Fishmo,” Reshia said.

“Ah, it’s Reshia!” The young boy said in a loud voice, causing the rest of the children to come out.

“Reshia! It’s Reshia!”

Reshia embraced the children that came out, handing the bags of sweets to Fishmo.

“Are you going to marry that guy called Gulland?” Fishmo asked.

“Of course not,” Reshia said.

“You sure have gotten famous. People are calling you a saint now.”

“Yeah... They do call me that, but...”

Reshia patted the children one after another as she sat on a chair. She cuddled with the children like that and told them a story. Unlike her usually strained face, she had a gentle expression about her as she told the happy story of a god who fell in love with a human.

The children listened happily to the story that could distract them from the bitter reality. By the time the story ended, it was already dark out. Reshia and Lili bid their goodbyes as they left the orphanage.

“Do you always do this sort of stuff?” Lili asked.

“I’m not a politician, so I can’t actually save them. But I think it’s too cruel to just watch them rot like that without doing anything.”

The words of this girl who had not even reached adulthood made Lili bite her lips. A few days ago, the king had asked her a question. He asked, ‘Do you have any intentions of becoming a real knight?’

The allure of that proposal greatly shook her heart. She had always dreamt of one day

being a knight. It was a dream she held even in her childhood when her father told her tales of heroes and valiant warriors. But being a woman greatly disadvantaged her, making her dream remain only a dream. Because of that there were many times where she wished she had been born a man instead.

But that very dream was at the tip of her fingertips now.

Worry tugged on her heart, but when she saw what Reshia did today, all of the sudden, it felt like her worries were so small.

She had to make a decision.

For a moment, the sword sheathed by her waist rung.



Level has risen.

36 -> 37

INTERMISSION

WOLF PACK

Status	
Name	Gi Gu Verbena
Race	Goblin
Level	75
Class	Noble; Subleader
Possessed Skills	Overpowering Howl; Sword Mastery C+; The King's Right-Hand Man; Cooperation; Throw Projectile; Versatile Master; Farseeing Eye

Gi Gi traveled deep into the south at the king's orders, hunting beasts along the way as he looked for goblins he could take as subordinates. If he could bring young goblins before the king, the king would surely be elated.

There was also a special meaning behind being allowed to have his own subordinates. Gi Gu figured it was proof that the king trusted him. He even anticipated that the king might allow him to lead his own army in the coming war with the humans. Because of that Gi Gu was particularly eager to complete this mission.

But...

"There's no one," Gi Gu said to himself as he eyed his surroundings.

There was still much water left in his water bag, and he had no trouble feeding himself, but with seemingly no end to this trip in sight, it seemed wiser to stock up now rather than later.

When he came to that conclusion, he sharpened his ears to search for water, then he made his way toward the sound.

"Mu."

"Gi!?"

Along the way he came across what seemed to be a goblin, but he looked odd. A birth defect, perhaps? The goblin's arms were relatively long compared to his small body. His legs were also short. He was much shorter than Gi Gu, who was a noble class, and was probably lacking even when compared to a normal class.

"Gi Ga's relative? A child?"

Puzzled, Gi Gu tilted his head, and so did the weird goblin in front of him.

"Well, it doesn't really matter."

As he thought that Gi Gu took a step, but that seemed to have frightened the goblin, as the goblin went running away.

"Hrm."

Gi Gu thought the odd goblin might lead him to his village if he followed, so he followed.

"Gi, Gu, Gigi!?"

The goblin couldn't talk, but he seemed to be cursing at him. Then all of the sudden, Gi Gu felt something coming from above.

"Nu!?"

Gi Gu Immediately jumped back. Just as expected, it was another goblin with a long arm that landed in front of him. This time there were two.

"Gi Gi—," one of them said.

"Prey," said another another.

Gi Gu smiled upon seeing the sharpened wood of a spear in the goblins' hands.

"That's not too bad."

When the goblins before him saw him smile, they unconsciously stepped back. Gi Gu himself did not notice it, but as a noble class who had fought powerful enemies one

after another, he had unconsciously picked up a habit of smiling fiercely during battles. To him there was be nothing odd about the way he smiled, but to the goblins watching him, that smile was the terrifying smile of a goblin; one that was fiercer than any other's.

The goblins before him looked at each other. The moment Gi Gu took a step forward, they made a run for it.

“Mumu.”

Should he use the Overpowering Howl he learned from the king here? He was done in pretty badly by that skill last time.

Despite being in battle, Gi Gu had enough leisure that he could afford to reminisce.

But the goblins were much faster than he thought, and in the blink of an eye, they had disappeared from sight.

“Whoops.”

It would have been a disaster if he lost track of them, so he quickly followed. When he caught up, the three goblins were standing up ahead, and between them and him was a shoddily made trap, covered only by some branches. Gi Gu stared at the three goblins, and they stared back at him in turn.

They seemed happy at their work.

“Mu...”

But as Gi Gu thought of the trap and the three goblins, gradually, anger filled him.

They actually thought he would fall into a trap like this! Not to mention something this shoddily made!

“You fools!!” Gi Gu yelled as he invoked his Overpowering Howl, causing the three goblins to cower.

When he kicked at the trap and scattered the branches that covered it, the smallest of the three goblins began to cry.

When he put his arm inside the tiny hole, it expanded because of how small it was, leaving the fattest of the three goblins perplexed.

When he started throwing away the thorns littered inside the hole, the tallest of the three goblins prostrated himself on the ground in despair.

“Listen well, fools! Traps are weapons meant to help us survive! It is a skill! And above all else, it is an art! Setting a shoddily made trap like this is an insult to me, Gi Gu!”

Gi Gu used the axe in his hand to cut several branches, sharpening one end to fashion them into spears. He used one of those spears to make the hole wider, then he filled the hole with those spears, sticking them into the bottom of the hole to make a bed of spears. Finally, he took thick branches, put them together atop the hole. Above those he added thin branches, added some leaves, and then covered everything with dirt.

With that the trap was perfectly concealed, but he wasn’t done yet!

On top of that already perfectly set trap, he even added some grass, making the perfect trap even more perfect.

“Behold, this is a trap!” Gi Gu proudly declared.

The three goblins looked at each other as they compared Gi Gu’s trap with theirs. The smallest of them walked up the trap to check Gi Gu’s work. When the other two followed, the three goblins started discussing among themselves.

When they reached a conclusion, the three goblins prostrated themselves before Gi Gu.

“Ki-ng!”

“Huh?”

“King!”

“I am king?”

“King!”

Erm... King is no good, Gi Gu thought. There is already a king.

“Don’t call me king.”

The three goblins started talking among themselves again.

“What do you call yourselves?” Gi Gu asked.

The three goblins glanced at each other, then Gi Gu started pointed at them one after another.

At the smallest one of the lot. “Midget.”

At the fattest one of the lot. “Fatty”

At the biggest one of the lot. “Blockhead.”

“Let’s change those names. From hence forth, I shall bestow upon you new names. Call yourselves these.”

The three goblins’ eyes sparkled.

Gi Gu named them in order. First was the smallest of the lot and the one with the longest arms.

“Gu Long.”

The other two goblins worded their admiration as they enviously looked at the small goblin.

The next one was the fattest of the lot.

“Gu Tough.”

Again voices of admiration rose.

The last one was the biggest of the lot.

“Gu Big.”

Again voices of admiration rose.

All that was left now was to decide how they should refer to him.

“From now on call me Elder Brother.” Gi Gu said.

“Elder Brother!” The three goblins said.

Good, Gi Gu nodded.

“Now I want you to bring me to your village.”

Gi Gu was elated. With this he would be able to complete his mission. But for some reason, the three goblins’ countenance paled.

“Village, driven out.” Gu Big said as he sank to the floor.

Gi Gu was puzzled.

“King, angry!” Tough said as he quivered.

“We, ran!” Long sorrowfully said.

Gi Gu didn’t really understand, but there was one thing he couldn’t let pass.

“King, you say?” Gi Gu’s eyes widened so much they seemed to make a sound. The three goblins shook. Gi Gu’s voice was angry, so angry it seemed like his kind behavior until now was all but a lie.

“There is only one king, my king!”

Gi Gu’s hold on his sword grew tighter as his breath grew ragged.

“Lead the way to your village. The false king shall be purged!”

Excited, the three goblins led Gi Gu away from the lake. They took down the beasts along the way under Gi Gu’s leadership, who made them work together as a three-man

cell. They could not believe how effective their attacks were against the powerful beasts that lurked the forest. It was such that the three of them actually held each other and cried tears of joy.

After Gi Gu filled his belly with the meat of a beast he'd never seen before, he looked around him. The trees in this area were all tall, but there was a lot more room to go through between the trees. More of the sun's rays passed through too, making the place much more brighter than normal. The place didn't suit the name 'Forest of Darkness' very well, but judging from the direction from which the sun rose, Gi Gu was sure this was still the same forest.

"Is the forest still far?" Gi Gu asked.

"Close!" Replied one goblin.

"Very!" Replied two others at the same time.

Gi Gu and his three new subordinates walked a bit after their meal, then the three goblins urged him to look up.

"The lookout, Wail."

It seems the lookout was up in the trees, Gi Gu thought as he looked up. When he did, a goblin jumped down. As expected, it had long arms and wielded a rusted short sword.

"Not too shabby." Gi Gu fiercely smiled.

The goblin ran up to him swinging its sword, but with a single blow from his axe, Gi Gu cut the goblin in half, bone and flesh altogether, letting spurt blue blood as the goblin fell to the ground.

"Elder brother!"

In the blink of an eye, Gi Gu and his three subordinates had found themselves surrounded from all directions. The three goblins quickly took formation, their backs against each other, ready to fend off the enemy. But though the situation seemed grim, Gi Gu kept smiling.

“As long as you fight according to my instructions, you’ll be able to win,” Gi Gu said.

In response, Tough beat his stomach, Big beat his chest, and Long beat the ground. The three goblins responded in their own way to show they would do as Gi Gu said.

“I am Gi Gu Verbena,” Gi Gu announced to the surrounding goblins, “I have come to these lands at the orders of the goblin king. You shall become my subordinates and swear fealty to the king! Should you refuse your lives shall be considered worthless!”

With his axe, Gi Gu knocked down a goblin that approached him while in the middle of his speech. Another goblin came after, and this time he used his long sword to skewer him before throwing away his dead body.

“GURuuRUGAGAAAAa!” Gi Gu bellowed out his Overpowering Howl.

As the shorter goblins cowered, Gi Gu gave out his orders to Long, Big, and Tough.

“Long, aim for the legs. Big, Tough, follow!”

Long, who was standing left of Gi Gu, used his long arms to strike the legs of the goblin before him. The weapon he used was the spear Gi Gu had given to him. It was a simple spear made from sharpening the end of a piece of a wood, but it was as long as Long himself.

The enemy goblin tried his best to defend against Long’s exceedingly long range.

“Go, Tough.”

But Tough came attacking from Gi Gu’s right side. He was using the same wooden spear though it was much shorter than Long’s. He easily swung that short spear against the enemy goblin.

As the enemy goblin cried out in pain, Big used his short sword to finish him off.

“Gi, Gi!?”

The coordination of the three goblin was so good that the surrounding goblins were all shocked.

“Run!” Gi Gu ordered, and the three goblins naturally followed.

As Gi Gu took down another enemy, Long kept the approaching goblins in check. As Gi Gu spectacularly led the three goblins, they kicked about the shocked goblins and ran into the village.

“GURu, Gi!?”

When Gi Gu spotted a goblin with red skin and long arms, he smiled.

“You must be the impostor.”

The long sword in his hand was dripping with blood, so he swung it once to clean it, then he made his way for the rare-class goblin.

“GURUGAAaa!” The rare-class angrily howled.

The goblins of the south became excited.

“Who are you!? What business do you have with me!?”

The three goblins following Gi Gu cowered for a moment, but Gi Gu calmly struck his axe into the ground and bellowed out his Overpowering Howl.

Silence filled the area. The power behind Gi Gu’s howl had overawed the goblins. The rare-class was no exception.

“..How many goblins you lead or which goblins you try to chase away is no business of mine. But naming yourself king is unforgivable. If I were to let you go here, my fealty to the king would be called into question.”

“What are you talking about!?” The rare-class said as he slammed his long arms on the ground and bellowed out a howl.

The master of the southern goblins was clearly enraged.

“There is only one goblin fit for the name king... And that is my master! You shall pay for this sacrilege with your life!”

Gi Gu held the long sword with both of his hands, and then he kicked off against the ground with the speed of a noble-class. Gi Gu moved so quickly that the rare-class could not react.

In one stroke, the rare-class' head had been cut off from his neck. Blood spurted from the opened neck as the goblin's corpse fell to the ground, and the surrounding goblins went into an uproar. But Gi Gu would not allow it to continue.

Gi Gu bellowed out. "From this day forth, this horde shall be under my name, Gi Gu Verbena!"

At the cry of triumph, the goblins of the south prostrated themselves.



Gi Gu Verbena's level has risen.

75 -> 1

Because the level has gone past the limit, class will now promote.

Status	
Name	Gi Gu Verbena
Race	Goblin
Level	1
Class	Duke; Subleader
Possessed Skills	Overpowering Howl; Sword Mastery B-; The King's Right-Hand Man; Wolf Pack; Throw Projectile; Versatile Master; Farseeing Eye; Ruler of the South

Overpowering Howl

Puts pressure on targets with a lower class than one's own.

Swordsmanship B-

Increases one's skill with the sword.

The King's Right-Hand Man

When fighting near the leader of the horde, your abilities will increase.

Wolf Pack

1. Direct subordinates of the same race will have their abilities bolstered.
2. Direct subordinates with low level or class will be protected against mental attacks.
3. Leadership increased.

Throw Projectile

Increases one's ability to throw.

Versatile Master

Skill with all sorts of melee weapons will be increased up to C+.

Farseeing Eye

The success rate of reconnaissance is increased. The success rate of tracking is increased.

Ruler of the South

Charm effect on the goblins of the south.

INTERMISSION

GASTRA'S ADVENTURES

Status	
Name	^{Gastra} Sovereign of the Wind's Howls
Race	Gray Wolf
Level	20
Class	Baby
Possessed Skills	Wind Slash; Charge
Divine Protection	None
Attributes	None

My name is Gastra.

I'm happy because mommy is always taking care of me. Whenever I wagged my tail and called out, mommy would immediately come to pick me up and cuddle.

"GAUuuGAUuu!"

Mommy, mommy!

"Yes, I'm coming. Good grief, you're such a spoiled pup."

Mommy is kind. She would embrace me into her chest just like this. Her sky-colored hair prickles when my tail hits it, but I can't stop wagging my tail.

I'm just that happy.

It's been lonely lately ever since dad stopped showing up, but...

I like mom the best. Mostly because dad is black and rugged, and he never hugs me. Of course, I love dad too. He would always defeat his enemies with his giant horn and give me food.

I have to become like dad one day.

I haven't seen Cynthia in a while. It's a bit worrying.

"Kuu Kuun."

Mommy, where is Cynthia? I asked, but mom just kept patting me until I forgot my worries.

She probably went with dad somewhere.

Oh, I know! They're probably out on a secret training!

Hmph! She must be planning on growing ahead of me, and then gloating over her newfound strength as she wags her tail!

I have to do something!

"Ah!"

"GAUGAUuu!"

Mom, I'm going out to train!



Lately, my surroundings have changed from trees to stones. There were a lot of people like mommy, but they weren't kind like her. There were even some who tried to hit me with a long rod.

I have to teach people like those the pecking order around here.

The strongest is dad, of course, then mom, and then me, and lastly, Cynthia.

Cynthia is training by herself though, so she probably intends to overtake me.

I went to teach those guys who tried to hit me a lesson. There were more of them than the nails on one of my paws. That means they should be my subordinates!

But even though subordinates are supposed to listen, they ran as soon as they saw me. I'm sure it must be because I'm scary!

Cynthia's scary too when she gets mad.

Enough to make me take a step back, that's why I try not to get mad.

"Kuun, GURUuu"

I won't do anything. Come here!

I tried calling to one of my subordinates, but he just let out a weird voice and ran away.

Mumumu... That's odd.

Welp, that's that. Now, what should I do... I know! Training!

If I'm always here in this stony place, Cynthia will probably leave me in the dust. What to do... Well, for the meantime, how about making lots of subordinates?

The two-legs aren't very reliable though. Four-legs are better.

There doesn't seem to be any around in this stony place though.

Hmm... I'll try going out!

"*Huff Huff!"

I went around to see if there was a hole somewhere, and... I found one.

I forcefully stuck my head in, and kicked off against the ground with my back legs.

When my head was halfway through, I saw the scenery outside. There was a lot of people.

"GURUuu."

I kicked off against the ground with my back legs several times to break through.

When I thought I'd finally broken through, a four-legged something suddenly approached, stirring up clouds of dust in its path.

I somehow managed to run away into a narrow space. Not even I could take something that big on. Dad might have managed though.

I continued to walk in that dark and narrow space for awhile until I saw a four-legged furball walking.

"Nyaa!"

Its fur stood up! Is it threatening me!?

"GURUuRUuu!"

Well, I'm not about to lose. Growling is my specialty. I've always been watching Cynthia do it. I'm sure I can do the same thing!

"Nyaa!?"

The furball was scared when I approached it, and it came running away.

Mumu, not good!

"GAUu!"

I pushed the furball that tried to run away from behind and pinned it down.

"Nya, Nya nyaa!?"

The furball tried to resist, but I pinned it down with two more of my legs. Eventually, the furball stopped struggling.

"GUu, GAUu!"

When it calmed down, I lightly bit it by its ears to ensure that it would be my subordinate after I released it.

"Nyaa!?"

The furball jumped out when I did, and then it started sniffing me. Even though it was trying to run away just a little while ago, suddenly, it was even rubbing its body on mine. I traced my paws on its slender tail that was standing.

The nose of the furball was warm as it kept sniffing me from the side.

“GAU, GAU!”

Alright, I made a subordinate! I should report to mom!

I took the puzzled furball with me to see mom.



“GAUu, GAUu!”

Mom! Mom!

“Oh, are you back, Gastra?”

“Sigh... It brought something weird back...”

I approached mom as she was walking toward that thing called a table and introduced subordinate no. 1.

Mom’s subordinate looked suspiciously at my subordinate.

“GAUu, GAUuuu!”

Aren’t I amazing!? I made my first subordinate!

As I wagged my tail, subordinate no. 1 rubbed me from my side.

“...Lady Reshia.”

“You know, Gastra.”

Praise me! Praise me!

Mom picked me up as usual when I rubbed myself on her feet. But just when I thought she would embrace me into her warm chest as usual, mom frowned as she held me up.

Huh?

“Gastra, you’re a wolf. Obviously, a cat won’t do, right?”

Cat? Puzzled, I looked down to my subordinate, but it seemed just as confused as I was.

Then I was brought down to the ground.

Huh? What about my hug?

Subordinate no. 1 rubbed itself on me while I was confused.

“Who would’ve thought Gastra would bring home an undesirable lover so soon?” Mom’s subordinate looked up to the ceiling.

“GAu?”

You’re a cat? I asked subordinate no. 1.

“Nyaa!”

Who cares if I’m a cat, the cat said as it approached to rub its body on me.

“Was the capital a bad influence?” Mom looked confused as she looked at me and the cat.

Hey, Mom, what’s a cat!?

Author’s Note:

Gastra’s subordinate is of course a female; a cat by the name of Lelouch, who considers the alley its territory.

Gastra will collect more and more subordinates from here on out, most of whom are... female.

CHAPTER 102

LILI'S WORRIES

It's been 10 days since we moved to the fortress. I've already grasped the layout of the surrounding area, so I was currently drawing the map on a wall in the king's room. I used a short sword to carve it. Overall, I was able to carefully explore the area a two day's distance from the fortress.

There were no beasts in the surrounding area that could hold a threat to me, even the ones that normally preyed on goblins. The area was relatively safe. Procuring food should pose no problem then, and with the increased birth rate, we should be able to increase our numbers quickly.

That settles the issue of quantity, leaving only the question of quality.

Currently my horde contains 1 knight, 7 nobles, 8 rares, 2 druids, 1 shaman, and 50 normal goblins. That's including the wounded and the goblins that are currently away.

If it wasn't for the existence of skills and magic in this world, the side with more numbers would surely win. But this world does have skills and magic, thereby allowing the existence of truly powerful beings who could literally slay a thousand soldiers by themselves.

The soldiers need to be raised well if we are to suppress such enemies.

For example, that man who swung his great sword with a ferocious smile, summoning storms of lightning to lay waste to the forest. How many such men does the human side have? I tried asking Shumea, but she couldn't give a straight answer. Apparently, her info mostly came from her brother. Sending him out might have been a bit too hasty.

Even if the goblins can't stop that man alone, a 2 on 1, no, even a 3 on 1 would be fine. I need to prepare the goblins enough to be able to fight such people evenly. The humans are numerous and they have many resources, a battle with them would surely expand, but even then, we have to win.

When I finished drawing the map, I stepped out.

Along the way I noted the knight class, Gi Ga, holding a class.

He was making use of the wide space within the fortress to teach the normal goblins how to use the spear. The goblins couldn't follow perfectly just yet, but regardless, it wasn't a waste to learn the spear under him. At the very least, it would increase their odds of surviving.

Goblins who had just grown out of their infancy were each given a spear by Gi Ga and made to thrust it into the empty air. They thrust and thrust, never stopping once, even as the wooden spear broke their hands and blood gushed out; Gi Ga's uncompromising training continued.

The length of their spears was increased according to their level.

There was a goblin amongst them whose spear was twice his height. Not a loafer, that one.

"Your Majesty!? ...Were you watching?" Gi Ga hurriedly approached me.

I told him to ignore me and continue.

The training of the goblins need to be improved wherever possible. Teaching them traps is one thing, but teaching them how to fight is a completely different matter. It is exceedingly difficult. To make things worse, our enemy, the humans, have a huge advantage when it comes to the knowledge of fighting.

Once we step out of the forest, the battle will probably move to the plains. Necessary precautions need to be made if we don't want to be preyed upon by their cavalry. For that, allowing the goblins a way to practice their tactics is a must.

The terrain advantage belongs to the humans. We'll have to get one over them some other way. It can be tactics, ingenuity... anything. I need people capable of thinking such methods and the methods themselves.

We will be invading the humans.

When I think about our current position in this game of war, I realize it is not only the lower class goblins who need to be trained like this, but also the higher class.



It's been a while since Lili last visited her family.

Currently, it wasn't her parents who managed the house, but her uncle's family. Their house was situated in a small hill, surrounded by earthen walls, making it look just like a fortress.

She didn't think about it when she was young, but now that she thought about it, their house did indeed look like it was built for war. Even the produce grown in their garden were all fruits whose rinds could be eaten in desperate times. Compared to them, the farmers nearby all raised produce that was easy to sell. The difference between them was as clear as night and day.

By the time Lili woke up from her thoughts, she was in front of a stone wall upon which she had carved an oath during her youth.

It read: 'I shall earn the title of knight with my sword. I shall protect the people and vanquish the monsters.'

It was the oath she made with her grandfather. She recalled repeatedly saying that oath out loud as a kid despite not understanding what it meant. As long as she had that will, she would become a splendid knight, her grandfather once said.

"Grandpa..."

Right now the person she had to protect was a single girl.

That was enough.

The king said he would bestow upon her the highest rank of Holy Knight. After Reshia left, he would give her the power to protect the town she was born in.

A gust of wind grazed Lili's cheeks.

The wheat field swayed and the trees rustled, singing the song of the wind god. This was the land her grandfathers had cleared out, a blessed land.

For whom should she wield her blade?

She would protect Reshia, of course. That wouldn't change. She could not throw away a girl like that who was burdened with a cruel fate. But once she becomes a holy knight, the power she would be responsible for would also increase. At that time, would she truly be forgiven for choosing to protect only a single girl?

"What should I do?"

She had a duty to either side.

Would she choose to save only one person? Or would she choose to protect the peace of a multitude of people?

"I shouldn't be... hesitating."

She should have already resolved herself. The peace of the people was Lady Reshia's wish herself.

"So... With this sword, I will..."

She traced the text carved on the wall.

The next day, Lili received the title of Holy Knight.



330 days remain until the war with the humans.

The goblin rate of reproduction was truly something. Although it's true that the birth rate has increased, the fact that goblins could be trained almost immediately after being born was a truly spectacular trait of theirs.

With Gi Ga's hellish training course and the abundance of food, the goblins could quickly grow up into adulthood in only a week. The number of soldiers have already surpassed 100, and the number of non-combatants is already looking to break 70.

At this rate, I can probably stop worrying about our numbers altogether and focus on dealing with the quality issue.

The goblins have been frequently hunting to teach the higher class goblins how to lead the lower class goblins.

How should one hunt the big prey to minimize casualties? I taught the rares and the recently evolved druids, Gi Ba, Gi Bi, Gi Bu, Gi Be, and sent them out to hunt.

The goblins with the Man-Eating Snake skill who've received Verid's divine protection were all excellent goblins as long as they were kept away from humans.

The ferocious Gi Ba could handle the sword and spear with ease, allowing him to excel at stopping the prey from moving. The water mage, Gi Bi, could often hit the enemy's weak spot. The close-combatant, Gi Bu, could fight in many ways, from using his axe to using his hands. The one-armed Gi Be could fight with his axe, sword, or spear; any enemy that approached him would be fiercely met by his arsenal of close-combat weaponry.

They were constantly bathed in blood causing the morale of their fellow goblins to rise while their enemies cowered. The weapons they used were improved as well. In the past, we used stone axes and wooden spears, but after the battle with the humans, we managed to acquire iron weapons for everyone.

Unfortunately, the weapons would eventually wear down. We need to find a way to repair them soon.

"The enemy has come, Your Majesty," the one-armed Gi Be said, waking me up from my pondering.

"That is an annie spider," I replied.

"If I recall correctly, this spider's saliva is poisonous, right, Your Majesty?" The water mage, Gi Bi, said.

That scholarly manner of talking made me chuckle.

"Hit it, kick it!" Gi Bu yelled.

"I suppose cutting its legs would be a good idea?" The fierce Gi Ba said, wanting to take the initiative.

“Yes, go!”

At my signal, Gi Ba ran. He slipped through the long legs of the annie spider, then with the stroke of his sword, he cut them off. Suddenly, the water mage, Gi Bi's, water balls came raining down on the spider, denting its skin.

“GURUuu!” Gi Bu growled as his wild dogs kicked off against the ground. As the wild dogs caught the attention of the annie spider from above, Gi Bu's axe came swinging for its legs. When Gi Bu was near the annie spider, he suddenly threw away the axe and started kicking at the stomach of the spider from below.

Quite the shrewd goblin, isn't he?

As the annie spider's stance broke, the one-armed Gi Be decapitated the spider with his spear.

Gradually, the light left the spider's eyes, but the goblins didn't stop attacking until it was completely silent.

“Good job, remember, this is how you fight together. Make sure to also remember to consider the normal class goblin's limits,” I said to ensure that they didn't forget the importance of working together. These goblins would most likely be a part of the main force in the next battle after all.

“As the king commands.”

After hearing their reply, I went back to the village.

CHAPTER 103

DEMIHUMAN VILLAGE

“I’ve brought news, Your Majesty.”

To strengthen the horde I had the rare goblins hunt the surrounding area, while I had the noble goblins go to the west to look for a path.

Gi Ji Arsil came to report their findings.

“We found a demihuman village. It’s about a four-day’s distance to the west and another day’s distance to the south. I was warned not to get any closer when I approached, so I took the others and went back.”

—Demihumans. After hearing about them from Shumea, I did expect there would be some villages to the west, but I didn’t think we’d actually stumble onto one. How fortunate.

“They warned you, did they? That’s not bad at all.”

Since they didn’t attack immediately, they must be intelligible. It’s good to avoid needless fights. I hope they’re willing to hear us goblins out, but if not, I’ll just have to take the human, Shumea, or the elf, Selena, along.

“So, describe to me these demihumans. How did they look?”

“They had legs like a spider’s, but their upper body was like a human’s. There might be other types in the other villages.”

Creatures not humans, but look like them. According to Shumea, some of these demihumans are friendly with humans, but there’s an even greater number of them living in the border afraid.

They were created by the god of wind and the god of earth, right?

I hear they used to live in the plains, but...

“Gi Ji, is that village situated in the plains?”

“No, it’s inside a forest. They built a nest of some sort. At first, I even thought it was a nest of annie spiders or giant spiders, but someone called out to us when we tried approaching.”

“Hrm.”

Well, it’s not like everything you hear is true.

I don’t know whether that’s always been their home, or they were driven away and forced to live there, but it is a fact that they are living in a forest now.

“Alright, good job. I’ll be paying that village a visit tomorrow. I’ll be relying on you to lead the way.”

“As you command.”

The next day, I took Gi Ji, Shumea, Selena, the shaman, Gi Za Zakuend, the wind mage, Gi Do, and the ferocious Gi Ba with his three-man cell group to the demihuman village.

I took only a few people with me to avoid alerting them. To ensure we had enough firepower, I made sure to bring the druid-class goblins.

According to Selena, the demihumans prefer to fight upfront rather than rely on magic. I’ve been talking with her to gather information ever since I got that report about the demihumans’ sighting.

It seems there is an old oath between the elves and the demihumans.

They would protect each other’s territories as long as they did not encroach on each other’s domains. The elves excelled in magic, while the demihumans used their strong bodies to hunt. I learned all sorts of things from Selena, from the way they marked their territories to the way they greeted each other.

Among the things I’ve learned was the favorite things of the demihumans. When I asked Selena about the spider-legged people, it turns out they were actually known as the Araneae. One of the araneaen tribes apparently liked fishes.

We were going to negotiate with them anyway, so I figured I might as well bring some gifts.

I checked with Kuzan whether it was possible to fish from the river flowing in the basement of the abyss, and apparently, it was indeed possible. It was just that the goblins preferred to eat meat, so no one ever really bothered.

When I got the fishes, I had to look for a way to carry them, as the distance to the village was quite far. They would spoil before we even got close. I figured I'd put them in some sort of container like a jar with water inside, but it turns out there's actually no such container in the goblin villages.

With the container plan out, I thought I'd smoke them instead. But when I tried doing it myself, I failed.

"Now what?" I said to no one in particular when I noted Shumea passing from the corner of my eyes.

Wait, there is someone who can help!

"Shumea, can you spare a moment?"

"What is it, Boss?"

After explaining my situation, she agreed to help me smoke the fishes. It's really inconvenient being a goblin. When the fishes were done, I placed them inside a box made out of bark.

They were poorly made, but it was better than nothing.

Along the way I conversed with Selena on matters regarding the demihumans. We moved a four-day's distance west, and then another day's distance south.

I had a normal goblin carry the box as we made way to the village.

"We're near." Selena's halved elven ears twitched.

"You can tell?" Shumea asked.

Sharpening my ears, I looked around us.

Hopefully everything goes smoothly.

“There are a lot of masses with seemingly eight-legs moving near us. The village should be no more than an hour away.”

Selena held her handmade bow. She looked so happy it seemed like she wanted to jump out in joy. She’s been showing a lot more emotions lately compared to when she first came to the fortress. I guess she’s finally gotten used to us.

A giant spider appeared along the way, but the goblins quickly took care of it.

“Ho...” Gi Za muttered before letting out a breath in admiration.

The scene before us was just that amazing. Densely packed trees were woven together with spider threads, creating a perfectly closed wall with no openings.

Without thinking it through, I tried touching the thread.

It was flexible, a little sticky, and thick enough that I couldn’t easily push through it with my finger. Judging from how much of it was used, it should be safe to assume that the demihumans are able to produce it.

The branches up above rustled, and I looked up. Up the defensive wall was a demihuman standing.

The lower part of his body was a spider’s, but the upper part was a human’s. Muscles covered his whole body, and a spear was on his left hand. He looked at us menacingly.

“Goblins, what business do you have here?” The man’s voice seemed muffled. Was that because of fear? Or was it because of anger?

“It’s the man from before,” Gi Ji said, “our king wishes to speak with you!”

I stepped forward.

“We are the denizens of the east. We came here to negotiate with you, the Araneae of

the Household of Crystals. We brought some gift too. I'd like for you to receive it."

I took the box from the normal goblin and threw it up the wall of threads.

The box landed right by the demihuman's feet. He looked at it, then he checked the contents.

"The reason you goblins know our favorite food is because of that elf?" The demihuman looked at Selena with a sharp gaze, but there was no intent to kill.

But that pressure was enough to make Selena hide behind Shumea.

Shumea wryly smiled. "It's true Selena is the one who told them about the fish, but the one who thought of preparing it in the first place is that boss over there."

"Don't open your mouth lightly, filthy human!!" the demihuman was filled with wrath when he spoke to Shumea.

"Gee, sorry..." Shumea shrugged her shoulders as she lightly scratched her head.

"What is your response?" I asked the demihuman.

My raised voice seemed to have somewhat pressured the demihuman, as he quivered a bit. "Wait for a while!" He said as he took the box and left.

"What do you think?" I asked Selena, but she didn't have a clear answer to give.

After waiting for a while, three demihumans appeared above the white wall. They walked vertically down the wall to us.

"In honor of the old oath, greetings, elf." A woman stepped out from the three araneae demihumans. She glanced at me for a moment, before turning to Selena.

I'm sure she means no ill will. The old oath was just so important that as demihumans they had to greet the elf first despite knowing I was the one with the most authority in our group.

I wonder just how much hold that oath has on them.

“A pleasure to make your acquaintance. I am a daughter of the sylph, a descendant of the forests and the winds.”

“The pleasure is mine. I am a daughter of the araneae, a descendant of the crystal.”

After she finished exchanging greetings with selena, she turned to me and bowed her head.

“I am the Black Darkness of the Demonic Children,” I introduced myself.

“It is an honor to meet you. I am a daughter of the araneae.”

It appears it is customary for the demihumans to first see who it is they are dealing with. There was some shred of intimacy in the way she spoke to Selena just now, but when she spoke to me, her manner of speaking was quite stiff. Nerves? Or is there something more to it?

“I am here as a representative of my village, my name is Nikea.”

“I am the king of the demonic ^{goblins} children of chaos who live in the east.”

The two male araneae behind her must’ve been her guards. Their whole body was covered in muscles. The sharp gaze they looked at me with spoke of their ferocity.

“To what does our Fizona owe the honor of this visit?”

“I wish to trade.”

The demihumans are just as I expected them to be with strong and sturdy bodies. I would really like to add them to my army, but it seems the demihumans and the elves are a proud bunch.

Their kind are ill-suited for subservience. It’s because of that that they couldn’t create a vast country and instead ended up in this tiny village. I doubt they would so easily prostrate themselves before me.

So first I’ll have to find out their situation. Neither Shumea nor Selena was privy to their true state of affairs, so I’ll have to go about this the long way.

“A trade? If so then we will only trade goods for goods.”

I feel like her eyes sparkled just now.

That probably means she thinks we can give her what she wants.

“We wish to trade our fish for your threads.”

We don't have any currency right now, so the word 'trade' is probably beyond the goblins' comprehension. To the goblins, it is enough to simply take from others what you lack. But a policy like that can't last forever.

If you attack someone and steal what is theirs to fill what you are lacking. When the time comes that you need more of it, from where will you take it? The people you stole from before have long died. The dead cannot produce anything. To be honest, even I'm not confident that the goblins would indeed be capable of producing something themselves.

The goblins are skilled hunters. They can even use traps now. In fact, the higher goblins have even started to use traps other than the pitfall I taught them. But the issue on food isn't something that can be solved forever with just hunting. Right now it's still manageable, but with the goblin's explosive reproduction rate, the forest will eventually be hunted bare.

That's why I don't want to take advantage of the goblin's love for meat. As much as possible their hunts should be kept to a minimum, taking only what is needed. That's why I don't want to trade anything else from our hunts beyond the meat. Other things like the skin of the beasts shouldn't be traded. Doing so would only make things worse. But at the same time, choosing not to trade such things limits my options.

Should I trade our services? That's not a bad idea, but the demihuman's strength is still currently a mystery. I could just fight them anyway or I could sell the service of our military... But a decision now is too hasty. I need more information.

In the worst case, I'll just have to trade those fishes.

“...We are currently not lacking in fish,” Nikea said.

“Oh?”

Is she bluffing or telling the truth? To be honest I’m not used to negotiating, so I can’t tell.

But—

“Then what is it that you’re interested in? We are trading because we wish to form a good relationship with the araneae,” I bluntly said that it was not wealth that we were after. I said it with a little bit of pressure though. They shouldn’t forget that the goblins could become trouble for them in the near future.

I’m sure she got the message.

If this negotiation fails, then so be it. We’ll just have to get their cooperation by force.

We both have something on the line in this trade. On my end, I have the goblin’s power and their future, on her end, she has her village.

It would be problematic if they forgot which side was stronger.

Our negotiations continued for some time even as I started to grow impatient.

“There’s a favor I would like to ask. Would you hear me out?” She said.

“It’s a request, so naturally I would have to hear you out first,” I said rudely as if to remind her of the difference in strength between our races. Nikea frowned for a moment before speaking her request.

She was poker-faced again as she spoke, but when I heard her request, I was shocked.

CHAPTER 104

MAN-EATING TIGER I

“You want me to defeat the Man-Eating Tiger?”

Nikea nodded. Her eyes weren’t lying. They were calm and unwavering.

Looks like she’s serious.

“It’s not literally a tiger. The term ‘Man-Eating Tiger’ is a sort of inside term among us.”

Why did they have to go out of their way to call it that? I recall Selena mentioning that the demihumans had a habit of likening fallen demihumans to animals. If so, then this man-eating tiger must be ‘fallen’ in some way. Meaning, it must be a living organism of some sort.

“Very well,” I said.

Gi Za spoke to me in hushed voices from behind. “Are you sure it’s wise to accept so quickly?”

“It’s fine,” I said back, “we have to show our strength anyway.”

An unexpected but fortunate turn of events. Honestly, I was uneasy trading only the fishes from the basement. With this we’ll be able to show our might while at the same time trading our services.

“Thank you very much,” Nikea said with strained breath, then she looked at me with a challenging gaze. “The term ‘Man-Eating Tiger’ is an alias of sort. Its true name is Gurfia.”

When Nikea uttered that name her two escorts gulped.

Looks like this piece of info will prove quite valuable.

“He was a young but powerful member of the Man-Horse^{Centaur} Tribe. Unfortunately, just some time ago, a massacre had caused him to lose his sanity.”

“Why is an araneae such as yourself so privy to the matters of the centaur?”

Nikea gulped. For a moment she glanced at Selena.

“...Despite all of us being descendants of the crystal we do not interact with each other. That... changed recently.”

Oh? The demihumans are trying to work together? What valuable information, and how fortunate too. If I was any slower, they might have succeeded and created their own country.

I think I know why she glanced at Selena. I smiled as I thought of the reason. She probably can't lie in front of her. It seems bringing Selena was a good idea after all.

“As a test to see if we could truly work together, Gurfia went with the other young ones to live in a single village, but...” Nikea said.

“The village was destroyed,” I concluded for her.

Nikea nodded. She seems to be telling the truth. When you put her story and Shumea's together, it seems likely that it was that rapier-user who did it. Shumea's former master who used Selena's power to move about in the forest. I won't thank him, but it seems his actions have had unexpected consequences.

“Gurfia managed to hold on to his life, but he ate the flesh of another descendant of the crystal.”

When Nikea said that Selena screamed and Shumea held her.

“In exchange for gaining power, he lost his reason. To this day he lurks the forest, unable to forget the taste of his fellow demihuman's blood.”

Nikea was biting her lips by the time she finished speaking.

“And the demihuman union you put up has left this man-eating tiger alone?”

“...The union or rather the promised cooperation between us isn’t actually functioning. Most of its proponents participated in that village, so there hasn’t been much progress at all.”

I see. That’s not bad for me. Since they still haven’t solidified their union, there should still be room for me to interfere.

“Very well. But before we begin, I would like to make a contract with you.”

“Meaning?”

“...I shall rid you of this man-eating tiger of yours, but in exchange, I would like for you to trade with us. I would also like you to invite my subordinates to your village.”

“...As you wish. The day you defeat the man-eating tiger, we araneae shall do as you ask, this I swear.”

I added the condition of sending my subordinates to her village as a precaution. Her village will be my foothold to the west.

I also need to prepare for the possibility of the araneae betraying me.

Nikea might have sworn these things before me, but that doesn’t mean the rest of her tribe would accept me. Not to mention, I even have a human and an elf with me. I don’t know exactly what they think of them, but I at least know they hate the humans.

“There are a few things I’d like to know before we go.”

Nikea filled me in the details, and then we left to subjugate the man-eating tiger.



Along the way I started thinking about the blood of the demihumans. The reason Selena went wild was also because she was made to drink it. If so, then it should stand to reason that the blood of the demihumans is able to bring out someone’s latent power when ingested by certain races.

“Shumea, are there any rumors among humans regarding demihuman blood?”

“Hmm? I don’t think so. That bastard, Gene, just happened to have a hobby of hurting others, so...”

Gene seems to be the name of that rapier-using man.

He forcefully made Selena drink demihuman blood.

I glanced at Selena whose countenance had paled.

Selena seemed to understand the intentions behind my question, she said, “According to knowledge passed down among us elves, when demihuman blood is consumed in scant amounts, it can act as a stimulant. That’s the reason why the humans persecuted them before.”

She held Shumea tightly as she spoke.

“Do you want some, Your Majesty?” The assassin, Gi Ji, asked.

“No, it’s about that demihuman-eater that Nikea mentioned,” I said back.

“You think it’ll be useful to us?” The shaman, Gi Za, asked.

“That’s one part of it. It might awake some unknown power within us after all.” I looked sharply up ahead as I wryly smiled. “The issue is how strong that demihuman-eater is. Is his power merely due to losing his sanity, ridding him of the limits that once shackled him? Or is the power he wields now something completely different. That’s what I’m wondering about.”

The former isn’t a problem. He would be no different from the mad shishi, Gi Zu. But the latter is different. A power like that encroaches on the unknown.

I should change the topic though. It won’t do to have the goblins thinking the wrong way when it seems like we could work together with the demihumans.

“...Are you going to kill them if their blood can make you stronger?” Selena fearfully asked.

I clicked my tongue at the back of my head. “No, it would be a waste to throw away

their cordiality. If we can avoid needless conflict, that would be best.”

Selena heaved a sigh of relief.

I added a warning. “But there will be no mercy for traitors. If the blood of traitors prove useful, then we’ll take every drop of it.”

“You can’t,” Selena said.

“Remember, Selena. We are not peerless in the forest. I refuse a future where the humans can do with me however they please. I am the king of the demonic ^{goblins} children of chaos. I kneel to none. If there is anyone who stands in my way, be they demihuman, beasts, or elves, I will use all of my power to destroy them.”

Until now she has seen my gentler side. Seeing this other face of mine seemed to be a great shock to her, as it made her look down on the ground, her countenance even paler.

“...To clarify, I don’t particularly hate the humans, Shumea. You don’t have to glare.”

“I’m not glaring or anything, Boss,” Shumea said. “I was just thinking how you don’t act like a goblin.”

Shumea patted Selena’s head, who was currently sniffing.

I certainly don’t act like a goblin, do I?

“Your Highness, someone is following us. Should we leave him be?” The assassin, Gi Ji, asked.

I looked to Selena for confirmation. She was still pale, but she nodded her head. “...Our pursuers seems to be araneae. They seem to be only following us.”

The gaze Selena looked at me with seemed to be puzzled.

I don’t actually know everything, you know.

“Traitors, or perhaps mere observers,” Gi Za said.

Indeed.

“Unforgivable. Shall we drive them away?” The ferocious Gi Ba said.

“No, I want information. Let’s catch them instead.”

I ordered the assassin Gi Ji and the ferocious Gi Ba to set up a trap for our pursuers instead, then we continued along our way with Selena in the lead. Halfway through we split off from Gi Za’s group and proceeded along as if nothing was amiss.

Selena was always keeping tabs on our pursuers, so our pace was quite slow. The pursuers never approached us, and our distance remained the same.

Gradually, we neared the location where the trap was set.

“...The trap seems to have been triggered. I heard a scream,” Selena said.

“Good!” I exclaimed, though at the back of my head, I was puzzled.

We went back the way we came at full speed. Selena and Shumea wouldn’t be able to keep up with my pace, so I left them with Gi Za.

They seemed to know where we were all the time. How did they end up falling for the trap?

Well, I’ll find out soon.



“...What are you bastards planning!?” One of the araneae demihumans asked.

“That’s what we should be asking you. Why are you following us?” Gi Ji calmly asked.

After the demihumans fell into the pitfall, Gi Ba and his three-man cell took out their weapons and pointed them at the demihumans.

The araneae demihumans were all men.

“We were making sure you wouldn’t tell the humans about our village!” The demihuman said.

“In other words, you can’t trust us despite your oath,” I said.

“You’re asking us to believe in some filthy goblins!? You bastards are like the mice of this forest.”

Apparently, he doesn’t realize that insulting us was the same thing as insulting themselves who fell for our trap. Are the demihumans muscle-brains too after all?

As I was thinking that to myself, Gi Za who had finally caught up had apparently heard our earlier exchange.

“Your Majesty, would you mind if I put to test their earlier words just now?” Gi Za asked.

A human-like face and a ferocious smile as he looked at the trapped demihumans. Just what kind of mad scientist are you supposed to be?

I agree though, these demihumans don’t really look like the type to fess up. That lie just now wasn’t very believable either.

I took one of the four long swords sheathed by my waist.

The others seemed to have notice what I was about to do, as Selena suddenly looked like she was about to cry, while the other goblins were expectant.

“Please wait!”

Suddenly, Nikea came running with two other demihumans.

“Goblin King, please wait!”

Nikea wore a frantic look as she approached me.

Gi Za was about to stop her, but I ordered him to stand back, then I spoke. “What’s the matter? I was just about to punish these men for their betrayal.”

My threatening posture was a bit exaggerated, but it was plenty threatening.

“I know I’m being impolite, but please hold your hand for just a moment,” Nikea said as she bowed her head so low as to touch the ground.

I sheathed my sword. “Well, alright. I’ll at least hear you out.”

With a glance, I ordered Gi Ba’s group to put away their weapons. The two araneae demihumans were left in the hole, however.

“Thank you. Your Majesty, I take responsibility for this incident. Please punish me,” Nikea said.

“Chief...” Said one of the demihumans who came with her, while the other one called out her name, “Master Nikea.”

The two demihumans still trapped in the hole were speechless as they watched Nikea. It seems she’s actually quite loved in their village. In that case, there’s no point in harming her. If they value her so, it might be better to use her as a hostage instead.

If I can pin her down, the person responsible for their entire village, then it might become easier to bring the demihumans under my rule.

“So, what exactly was this whole thing about? We would like an explanation,” Gi Za said in my place while I was quietly thinking.

Well, alright. The demihumans have an inclination of putting a lid over unpleasant things. If I take a stance where I’m not willing to have a change of heart unless they properly explain, we’ll be able to exert our superiority wordlessly, and at the same time, make it appear that I’m really angry.

I made sure to wrinkle my face with a frown to appear even more menacing.

Gi Za’s really useful. Though I think he might just be really salty over the possibility of not being able to taste demihuman blood.

“...Those people are fledglings of the monocrystal. They chased after you because of my inability to properly explain. There is no other reason. Please...”

Monocrystal? Considering she said fledgling of the monocrystal, I suppose it's just a term pertaining to their age. I wasn't sure though, so I asked her about it. Because of that the situation took an unexpected turn.

One of the demihumans trapped in the hole finally couldn't stand seeing their chief with her head bowed to the ground.

"Chief, you don't really have to go that far..."

But the moment he said that, Nikea suddenly erupted. "What you unfilial fools tainted was none other than the pride of the descendants of the crystals! We exchanged oaths with these people! If word gets out that we were unable to keep our word – an oath we made just a while ago no less – we will forever be branded as a people without honor! You have shamed our proud tribe!"

Her voice held within it a pressure equal that of my own howl.

All voices went silent as even the very air seemed to rip at her wrathful voice.

CHAPTER 105

MAN-EATING TIGER II

In the end, our two araneaen pursuers were taken away by Nikea's escorts.

"Lord Nikea, are you not planning on returning?" I asked, the manner I spoke with her this time was much more polite. She was an ally, after all. It wouldn't hurt to show her some respect.

Nikea shook her head. "No, I must take responsibility for this incident. Please let me show you the way."

I did wonder for a moment whether it was really alright for someone in her position to so casually decide that, but considering I wasn't any better myself, I refrained from saying anything more.

"If this happens a second time, we shall handle it ourselves. I hope you understand," Gi Za said.

He really intends to test my words, huh. What is he going to do if he loses his mind?

"Your bad habit is showing," I warned him.

Gi Za quietly laughed. "There can be no progress unless one remembers his own failures, Your Highness."

I was speechless.

In any case, it seems that the elves acknowledge the effect of demihuman blood as a stimulant when used in sparing amounts. Doesn't that mean that it's essentially safe to use?

But then again, our current mission is to subjugate a demihuman who has lost its sanity after drinking too much.

"This incident will not be repeated, I stake my life on it," Nikea said.

Is this how all demihumans are?

“Enough of that. There should still some distance until our destination.” I said.

Nikea nodded. “Yes, we need to head north a bit more. After a day of walking, the ruins of a village should come to view. That place is its base.”

The remains of the slaughtered village.

“Since we have some time until then, why don’t you tell me a bit more about the descendants of the crystals.”

“About us?” Nikea asked, puzzled.

“Yes. Being isolated from the world as I am, I know little about the descendants of the crystals. In a sense, it could be said that getting to know you is the very reason behind our trade.”

I have to know.

As for what I’ll do afterwards... Well, I’ll think about it then.

“What will you do after knowing?” Nikea asked.

“I am going to make a country. When that time comes, I will take those worthy with me.” I answered.

“A goblin kingdom...” She muttered.

The silence that followed after was short, but it was deep. The demihumans failed to unite themselves. What I intend to do is something that they would have done had they succeeded in their first step. Unite themselves and then create a country of their own, that would have been their path, if not for the tragedy their fellow demihumans met.

When you look at it that way, it suddenly becomes obvious why Nikea went solemn. “... I understand,” she said, “there was also that incident just now. I’ll tell you about us.”

The answer that came after the silence was exactly what I'd hoped for.



I walked through the forest as Nikea spoke about the demihumans. Around the time when the body of the Fire God had sunk past the trees, we made camp and ate.

The history of the demihumans was much longer compared to the goblins'.

They are said to be one of the first created along with the elves. They had been living on the land before the humans were even created. Throughout their long history, the demihumans split off ceaselessly, until one day, the 'great war' happened.

In the great war, where all living creatures fought, the number of the living was greatly reduced. It was then that the humans began hunting them. With their numbers few, the demihumans had no choice but to run away to a place the humans could not reach. They ran to the depths of the forest, the untrodden lands, but they suffered even more losses.

The goddess of the underworld's invasion concluded 400 years ago. At first, the humans did not know from where the goddess' army would attack, so they sought to illuminate the whole world.

The deep valley, the thick forest. That was where the demihumans chose to live, but they were chased away and killed again. Even the clan Nikea's Araneae belonged to was driven away. In the end, they ended up in the forest. This happened 300 years ago.

The elves gave them permission to use the lands, so there was no war between their kind and the elves. In fact, they would even help the elves whenever they were in trouble.

I asked Shumea if those things really happened.

"You think I'd know!?" She angrily retorted.

Well... There is probably no human left alive from that time.

It's an old story, so I'm sure it wouldn't be strange if some points have distorted, but

in any case, the main point is that the humans chased them into the forest. If nothing else, their anger is the real thing. Nikea isn't one to let her emotions rule her, but I think it would still be best to keep Shumea away from her.

I learned several things from my talk with Nikea. The demihumans apparently put a lot of emphasis on duty.

I still haven't thought of a way to pull them in, but it feels like I've gotten one step closer to conquering the demihumans.

We goblins don't have any difficulties moving about in the night, but Shumea, being human as she is, still isn't quite used to it, and surprisingly, Nikea too. She's a spider, so I thought she'd be pretty good at it, but apparently, that's not the case.

Apparently, it was easier to snuggle up to fire than to the darkness. How peculiar.

"There is one thing I want to ask. How did our pursuers know where we were?"

"It's probably because of our special ^{skill} ability," Nikea said as she drew threads from the end of one of her legs. She ignored the shock of everyone around her as she wove those threads and brought them before me.

"We can make our threads as thick and as tough as we wish. I'm sure someone must've attached an extremely thin thread on you and your men." Nikea used one of her other legs to shoot out a thread just thick enough that we could see it, and wrapped it around the nearby trees.

So this is their special ability. Demihumans can't use magic, but in exchange, they've been blessed with special abilities and a powerful body. It seems Selena's info was right.

"I see. Yet even with those special abilities of yours you still can't defeat the man-eating tiger?"

The wall of threads I saw back in their village was not something that could be easily destroyed.

"Everyone has their strength and weaknesses," Nikea curtly replied.

I silently nodded in response. She probably won't reveal such crucial information to me. We're not so close that we would be comfortable telling each other our weaknesses.



"A four-legged creature is approaching, Your Highness," Gi Ji said.

I looked around.

"Is it far?" I asked.

"No, it's almost here!" Gi Ji replied, but by the time he finished speaking, the surrounding trees rustled.

"GyaUAAAaGAGAAaAA!"

Was it drawn by the light?

It struck out with the spear in its hand against the trunk of a nearby tree, and then... it stood. On the other end of its cracked skin was burning red flame.

Is there fire underneath its skin?

The spear that penetrated the tree was red and hot; the tree it penetrated quickly charred.

"It's here. Gi Za, Gi Do, cover me!"

"Turn Me ^{Enchant} into a Blade!"

Black flames clad my long sword as I stepped out. Our clash was only for an instant. A strong wind accompanied that thing's spear as it swung it down.

Sparks flashed from its spear.

The heat coming from that thing's hands was heating the spear. Demihumans can't use

magic, so that means... that's its special ^{skill} ability!

If the araneae have their threads, then the centaur have their equivalent. Isn't it hot? It seems its skill works completely different from my black flames.

The black flames looking like fire is nothing more than a coincidence in invocation of ether. This enemy is different. Even its very body is literally burning from within.

Our weapons clashed. One was a long sword clad in black flames, the other was a burning red spear.

As black flames mingled with red, I challenged the enemy to a melee. The enemy had the advantage in reach, so the closer we fought, the more advantageous it would be for me. As our weapons locked, I tried to push forward, but the enemy deflected my sword and swung down its iron spear.

In that instant, I closed in on the enemy. The one-eyed snake's blessing made the flow of ether smoother, allowing me to inject ether directly into my legs.

My sword wielded under my arms, I sent forth an attack that would quickly settle the battle.

In an instant, one step forward!

The attack unleashed, faster than any other!

...And yet!

"GiyaUAAAaGAGAAaAA!"

The centaur howled, and in the instant my sword was about to reach its body, a wall of flames blocked my view, slowing down my attack.

"Nu!?"

I tried to cut the wall of flames down from the side, but the enemy's spear came sweeping into my arm. When it hit, I was sent flying like a ball.

What kind of unreasonable strength is this!?

“GUu!?” I stifled the cry of pain that sought to come out as I once again wielded my sword. But when I glanced at it, I noticed it had already been broken. I threw away the sword and took out a new one from the remaining swords sheathed by my waist.

“GYaUAAAaGAGAAaAA!” The centaur howled.

I thought it would attack, but it just struck its spear into a nearby tree.

What’s going on? Well, in any case, it would be rude to look a gift horse in the mouth.

Not a trace was left of the wall of flames that had obstructed my vision. Belatedly, pain came running through my body. It sought to take away my consciousness, but I endured it.

After sending me flying, it seems to have changed its target to Shumea and the others.

As it howled, it kicked its hooves against the ground.

“Tch, Selena, it’s coming,” Shumea said to Selena as she took on that incoming pressure head on. She didn’t bother to try and hide her shaking legs. Wielding her spear, she stepped in front of Selena.

“Gi Za, support them!” I said.

“On it!” Gi Za replied.

Gi Za and Gi Do invoked their magic. Although it wasn’t from pointblank range, the wind magic they unleashed had formidable firepower, but a swing of the centaur’s spear was all it took for the centaur to dispel it.

“How!?” Gi Za spat.

He invoked his wind a second time. This time it was far stronger, a cyclone even forming.

The centaur howled as it swung its spear against the cyclone. The wind caught fire as they clashed, and in the end, it vanished, but it was not for nothing, as the centaur

stopped moving.

That's good enough!

"My life is like a cloud of dust!"
^{Accel}

Ether blew up from behind me, propelling me forward through a wall of air.

I kept going even as my body neared the centaur, then I... rammed my body into it!

"Boss!?"

Our bodies only touched for a moment, but my shoulder and my arms already smelled burnt. But that's only a given, I suppose. After all that thing is burning hot enough to spread its heat into the spear.

"I'm fine!" I swung my sword to show I was alright. At the same time, I clad my sword in black flames again.

It was time for round two.

"GYaUAAAaGgagaAaAA!"

"GURUuuAAaAAaAA!"

As the enemy howled, I howled back with my World Devouring Howl.

CHAPTER 106

MAN-EATING TIGER III

I tried to bind the enemy's movements with my World Devouring Howl, but the enemy howled again. My World Devouring Howl seemed to have slowed it down, but that second howl allowed it to shake those effects off.

Equal? No, he's a little weaker.

He's mad though. If I'm careless, I'm the one who'll end up injured. I still have three swords left. Can I finish him off with just those?

Enchant
"Turn Me into a Blade!"

Black flames clad my sword as I faced the enemy again. The centaur kicked its hooves against the ground as it inclined its body toward me. It looked just like a bull about to charge.

"GYaaRUAAaAAa!" The maddened centaur charged toward me.

I swung my sword from below.

I filled my legs with ether and kicked off powerfully against the ground to close the distance and nullify the long reach of the enemy's spear. At the same time, I unleashed my sword from below toward the centaur with a force capable of breaking even a boulder.

The centaur swung down its spear as I swung up my sword.

—It's a small difference, but the faster one is me!

The lower part of the centaur was cut as my sword slashed up to meet the descending spear. I stopped for a moment to confirm the enemy's wounds.

"GYaaRURUAAAA!" The centaur howled.

But the enemy didn't care about its wounds even a little, and it swung down its spear again. Taking on the force of the descending spear was just like taking a falling tree head on. I was pushed back.

—Is the enemy stronger!?

My legs sunk into the ground as my arms endured the pressure of the spear. When I tried to move, I found that I couldn't. I clicked my tongue.

The enemy howled a deafening cry as it swung down its spear a second time. There was no hesitation nor pain to it, only the desire to crush the enemy before it.

“My life is like a cloud of dust!”
^{Accel}

I blew up ether behind me and rammed my body into the centaur again. I expected to send the enemy flying, but it managed to endure the force this time.

The centaur's legs sunk into the ground, but the one suffering was me. The heat emanating from its body was just too hot.

The part that touched its body had already started to burn.

“Let my body be inviolable!”
^{Shield}

The burns stopped when I invoked Shield, but then the enemy's spear came swinging from the right. I dodged it by bending down my body, and then as I jumped back, I swung my sword toward its arms.

—It's hard!

The skin of the demihuman was hard like an armor. As my sword flicked off, it affected the direction of the enemy's spear. I managed to cut the enemy, but it was a shallow wound, unable to reach to the bones. Regardless, the enemy raged as it looked to kill me.

“GYaAaaRURUAaAA!”

Seemingly having lost itself in its rage, the centaur charged at me with its spear held

high. It was a charge that wouldn't lose out even to the human cavalry.

“Turn Me ^{Enchant} into a Blade!”

I invoked enchant along with the ^{Third Impact} Third Chant and the King's Dance at the Edge of Death. All the damage I've been receiving until now would be inflicted double to the enemy. That power burned in the black flames that clad my sword. My Sword Mastery A- helped perfect my movement as much as it could.

Using only the necessary power to move my arms as my elastic legs supported them, I took a breath in preparation of the fastest attack I could muster.

The enemy was pointblank.

The spear was the first to descend, and then my sword.

—But the faster one is still me!

Spear and sword clashed in midair. Red flames mingled with black. It was a battle of strength as our weapons clashed, but in the end, we both deflected to the side. Both of our stances broke, but I managed to endure it, and as I turned to the centaur, I saw the enemy wide-open.

Forcefully, I took my sword back and thrust it toward the enemy.

—I'll be taking your life!

My sword entered the chest of the centaur, and it stopped moving.

Still clad in black flames, I gradually pulled out my sword from the body of the unmoving centaur.

When I'd pulled it out, it suddenly occurred to me that the battle might not be over just yet, so I reassumed my stance.

“Get back!” Gi Za said.

But then Gi Za called out, and I reflexively jumped back. The spot where I was just

moments ago was now taken up by the fire pouring out from the wounds of the centaur. The shaman, Gi Za, tried to snuff out the fire with his wind, but like pouring water on hot stone it had no effect.

The raging flames dominated those powerful winds that could tear apart even iron.

“Abominable... Humans...” The words that left the maddened centaur were full of hate.

Seeing it speak surprised me a bit, but it didn’t change my resolve to kill it.

The flames looked for me, but Gi Za’s winds altered its direction, opening a path which I took. It was scorching hot, so hot just the winds were enough to burn one’s skin and keeping one’s eyes open was nearly impossible. I called the black flames upon my sword once more.

If I could get past those red flames, I would be able to reach the centaur’s body. It won’t die with a sword to the chest, so this time I’ll have to take its head.

But when I was about to take the centaur’s head, the flames pouring out from its body tried to slam into me like a blunt weapon.

—How!?

Spitting the same words in my mind that Gi Za spat a while ago, I met the red flames with my own black flames, but I immediately regretted it. It was foolish to try and cut flames with a sword, yet contrary to my expectations, when my sword met the flames, I felt a weight behind them, and I was able to deflect them.

—A chance!

Quickly changing my thoughts, I took back my sword and held it underneath my arms as I ran for the centaur’s head.

I swung my sword with great power. If this hit, even its bones would surely be crushed.

But in that instant, something suddenly wrapped around me and the centaur, a white something... Spider threads!

“Ku!?” I said in surprise.

“...GYaaRURUAAaa!” The centaur howled.

“What are you doing, Lord Nikea!?” Gi Ji asked.

The thread wrapped around me and the centaur clearly came from her legs.

“It would be better if we could take him back alive,” she said.

Those words poured cold water over our intense battle.

So that’s what she was planning!

Nikea calmly pulled on her threads despite my glare.

“My threads are the toughest among our tribe. They cannot be cut no matter how strong one is. Goblin King, do not waste your strength,” Nikea said as she watched me struggle.

The assassin, Gi Ji Arsil, pointed his blade at her. He said in a cold voice, “Do you intend to harm the king? Release him at once!”

“I forgot to mention this, but...” Nikea began to say.

It was then that I noticed the centaur in pain. A closer look would show that the threads wrapped around it had turned purple.

“My threads have toxin in them. If you hurt me even a little, a powerful poison will enter your king,” Nikea said.

Suddenly, the threads wrapped around the centaur burned.

“Impossible! It’s been treated several times with water spider oil!” Nikea cried out in alarm.

It seems the situation has turned for the worse.

I wonder if I can get rid of these threads wrapped around my sword with Enchant.

Enchant
“Turn Me into a Blade!”

I called forth the black flames and cut off the threads.

“!? That’s... Impossible...” Nikea cried.

I cut off the rest of the threads even as I ended up cutting myself a bit.

Just as I managed to free myself, the spear of the centaur approached. I deflected it with my sword clad in black flames.

Looks like I really will have to kill this guy.

“Abominable... Humans!”

Those words seething with hate resounded right in front of me as the spear descended and clashed with my sword.

CHAPTER 107

MAN-EATING TIGER IV

I was stunned when our weapons clashed. The maddened centaur used that opportunity to quickly close our distance, bringing its scorching flames right in front of me.

—Damn it. Like this I can't even get near it anymore.

Making the most out of our clashing weapons, I pushed the centaur back, then as I gathered ether into my arms, I repelled the centaur.

"Abominable... Human..." The maddened centaur seemed lost for a moment, as if it was hallucinating of a place not here. When it woke up, it came charging again. Its strength seemed endless. No matter how much I cut it, I just can't seem to hurt it. I never thought this battle would be this difficult.

More and more fire burned as the centaur attacked, the temperature around it gradually rose until that annoying wall of fire came to view.

It seems the more I cut it, the longer it spends hallucinating. Technically, that's an opening I should be able to use, but the heat is making it hard to approach. Right... In other words, I can't do anything right now.

After being stunned for the umpteenth time and recovering, the centaur turned to me. "Filthy... Goblin..."

The centaur already looked no different from a blazing flame. The flames from inside the wounds I've cut could be seen wavering. How could someone turn into a monster like this?

Is it obsession? Or a terrifying grudge?

There is probably no one who hates the humans as much as this centaur.

—But even then... I won't lose.

If I withdraw from this fight, this mad monster would surely hurt the people following me. Besides, didn't I vow to destroy everything that blocked my path?

Gritting my molars, I held my long sword tight.

—Let's do this!

I glared at the enemy before me.

"GURURUUuAaAaAA!!" My World Devouring Howl signaled the start of my counterattack. Ether filled my legs as I kicked off against the ground and leaped like a beast.

The wall of flames approached.

"Let my body ^{Shield} be inviolable!"

Black flames covered my body as I charged into the mouth of hell with my sword wielded to my right. The centaur's spear descended to greet me, but I stopped my body and dodged. The force behind that spear as it grazed me was like that of a huge tree.

—EnDurE iTTTt!

I gripped my sword as tight as I could to keep myself from trying to cover my face from the heat or run away from this hell. The spear only grazed me, but the force behind it caused blood to drip down my cheeks.

Still, I endured and stepped forward with my left foot with so much power it seemed I was trying to crush the ground.

"Turn Me ^{Enchant} into a Blade!"

As soon as the centaur's body came to view from beyond the flames, I let loose my sword from below!

"GYaaaAAga!" The centaur staggered.

Meanwhile, the centaur's flames started to eat through my body the moment I canceled Shield. The heat was enough to drive me mad, but I endured it even as the oxygen around me burned up, sending slash after slash against the centaur.

“GYaaAGAGAAAaaaAAa!?”

—Still not enough!?

Again I struck with my sword, but when I stepped forward, something blocked one of my eyes. In the next moment, I felt the pain of heat, then my head swayed... Did I get hit!?

In that hell long past the point of ‘hot’, the heat quickly changed into pain.

As I staggered, the enemy reassumed its stance as it held its spear. It seems that’s what hit my face just now.

The pain of the heat coupled with the lack of air stopped me in my tracks.

Despite still staggering and still in pain, I forced myself to take a breath. When I looked up, I saw the centaur’s spear.

I’m going to lose, I thought. But as soon as I did, Reshia’s figure flashed through my mind.

—No, not yet!

I can’t lose!

I will win and take everything!

The Soul of the Berserk King awoke.

Pain and anguish seemed to vanish as the maddened soul of the berserk king howled in fury.

“GURUuuaAaAa AaAAa!!”

The descending spear was flicked away as my sword met it, but by doing so, my sword

finally broke. I threw it away. Only, two swords were left.

I looked at the enemy with the other half of my vision.

Black flames appeared from the base of my two swords, climbing up them as the black flames wrapped around their blades. At the same time, anger and battle intent screamed within my mind, demanding that I slay the enemy before me. My lips curved into a smile. It was the joy of battle, the happiness of dancing at the edge of death.

“GYaaARUAAaA!”

I met the descending burning spear with one sword. Naturally, I couldn’t win with just one hand, so the flaming sword struck down my sword along with my shoulders. The smell of burnt flesh filled my nose as I released that sword.

Joy tried to fill me, but I pushed it back to keep my sanity. I grit my teeth hard enough it seemed they would break, all in an effort to keep me from losing my mind.

The spear continued to burn my shoulders, but I ignored it and moved onwards with my remaining sword in my left hand.

“GURUuuuAAAaAAa!!”

The part the burning spear touched had already started to char, but still, I stepped onwards.

Pain ceased. I stopped even the black flames that sought to burst out of my wounds, gathering all of my power into my sword.

Enchant
“Turn Me into a Blade!”

From the left to the right, I swung my sword, cutting at the boundary that separated the human body from the horse. Like that the Man-Eating Tiger was cut with its flame.

Flames came pouring out of the upper human body as it fell along with its lower horse body, but the flames were already starting to peter out.



“Why...” The man asked.

His life had long come to its end, his eyes hollowed, but still he mustered the last of his strength to turn to me and ask.

“Why... Can’t I win?”

The part I’d cut had already charred. The fact that he was still able to talk despite that showed just how miraculous his vigor was. It was as if his obsession wouldn’t let him die.

“I ate the corpses of my friends, I threw away... my pride... I became a demon... I lost everything, and yet... Why can’t I... win? Why can’t I... avenge my friends!”

Those words were the cry of a man who’d sworn vengeance. The cry of a man whose dreams were crushed.

I answered him. “Because my flame is still burning bright.”

If there was a difference between us, then it’s the difference in resolve. His decision to throw everything, to throw even himself away... If there was a difference, then that would be it.

“What does a goblin...” The man asked.

I replied. “I have a dream. A dream to one day conquer this world and everything in it.”

I buried my sword into the ground beside the man’s face.

“I won’t lose. I will take everything, the humans, the demihumans, even the elves... everything.”

The man looked shocked for a moment, his eyes opening wide. Just a little, he seemed to laugh.

“Big words... for a... goblin... But, I see... Before I knew it... I had... burned out...”

The man looked at his reflection on my sword that stood beside him as he breathed his last.

Despair stood before him, but it was not despair that made him stop. It was he himself. He was the one who chose to give up.

The demihuman who stopped walking because of despair became a flame and burned away.

But I kept struggling and continue to do so until now. My flesh burned, I couldn't even breath, but still I walked onwards. That is why I won. Victory did not move my legs, but because I never stopped, I found victory.

“Farewell, demihuman of the flames.”

As I carved the image of the demihuman that burned with his despair into my mind, I left the place.

When I looked up, the hour of the night god had already passed, the body of the fire god hung from the sky once more, shining its light upon the world.



Level has risen.

37 => 45

CHAPTER 108

ENTANGLING THREADS

“Now then, let us talk,” I said.

Nikea looked like she’d eaten a fly as she nodded.

“First of all, I shall have you keep your earlier promises,” I said.

“Of course, we will do as we promised,” Nikea said.

“I also want you to introduce me to the other descendants of the crystals.”

“...Why?”

“To make friends, of course, why else?”

“I wouldn’t know.”

The battered araneae was forced to acquiesce to my requests. As such, trade between the goblins and the araneae would begin, their village would have to welcome my goblins, and Nikea herself would have to introduce me to the rest of the demihumans.

I’m sure Gi Za would reprimand me, saying I’m too soft, but it’s really not a good idea to demand too much. Tribes that don’t hold ill will to us goblins are precious. The araneae will serve as our foothold into the world of the demihumans. It wouldn’t do to sour our relationship.

“That will be all,” I said.

Nikea looked at me, confused.

“Is that really all?”

“Yes. Oh, there is one more thing.”

“What?”

Nikea went full alert as soon as I said there was one more request.

“I would like to rest at your village tonight.”

“...Oh, alright.”

Nikea laughed a little when she saw me mischievously smiling.

After defeating the fiery demihuman, we headed back to the araneae village. When we got there, we were led to our lodging, where beds made out of spider threads greeted us. Shumea and Selena immediately went to jump on them, leaving me dumbfounded. After that nothing unusual happened. Even the reaction of the araneae upon seeing us return looking exactly as if they'd seen ghost was just as expected.

From here on out is Nikea's job.

Will the araneae... Will Nikea keep her promise?

Tonight, I refrained from sleeping and kept watch for the goblins.

“Do you truly intend to trust them, Your Highness?” Gi Za asked.

I smiled. “I don't trust them yet. Everything will depend on their response. If the need arises, I don't mind making every araneae taste the bitterness of defeat.”

“At that time, please let me lead the battle.”

They used wood for their pillars, while they used mud and threads for their walls. We sat before the entrance of our lodging.

Gi Ji Arsil prostrated himself before me. “I shall surely present the head of that araneae, Nikea, to you, Your Majesty.”

“Don't rush. The way things are going, Nikea probably won't become our enemy. If anything, she's most likely to fight for us in the case something does happen,” I said.

“Against her own tribe?” The ferocious Gi Ba asked, to which I nodded.

Gi Ba and the other goblins of his generation were raised in an environment where all goblins were allies. He must have grown up thinking that those of the same race would never attack each other.

Gi Za and Gi Ji understood how the world worked, but Gi Do and the others could not.

“Your Highness, they live in the same village, surely they wouldn’t attack each other,” Gi Do fearfully said.

“The people unhappy with Nikea might not think so,” I said, but again Gi Do could not understand.

Gi Ba sneered. “Idiot.”

“You mean they would actually fight each other despite being of the same race?” Gi Do asked.

I touched my chin. “They don’t necessarily have to fight out in the open. They could just grumble. Weren’t there araneae who followed us this morning? That woman probably doesn’t have this whole village under control.”

“In other words, her enemies might ignore her words and attack us,” Gi Za said.

The other goblins nodded.

“Then which side will we pick?” Gi Ji asked.

I became thoughtful. “Hmm...”

Would Nikea really stay put even as her own tribesmen are killed? I’m sure she would choose them over us despite their differences.

“If Nikea bares her fangs at us, we will respond in kind.”

As my heart ferociously laughed, a twisted smile rose upon my lips.



“Nikea of the hard crystal, do you truly intend on accepting them? They are goblins. You think such creatures are trustworthy?” One araneae said.

Up above at the tallest tree of the village was a vast hall made of threads, where the masters of the village gathered.

“Exactly, Nikea. Why is someone as wise as you unable to understand? Those goblins should be killed,” another araneae said.

Voices of complaints rose one after another, but Nikea only calmly listened.

Of the people gathered, more than half of them were against the goblins. About 30% of those voiced their criticism loudly.

“...” Nikea quietly listened to those voices, then she turned to a single araneae. She asked. “Do you think the same, Nerou of the blue crystal?”

That araneae was young and overflowing with elegance. A smile appeared on his lips. “But of course, the goblins are filthy creatures.”

The araneae was smiling though his eyes were filled with scorn.

Nikea quietly sighed.

Nerou was a skilled araneae with good blood. He was originally chosen to be the next chief, but Nikea became the chief instead. From then on he has curried favor with the other araneae, using them to try and seize the position of chief from Nikea.

Nerou never openly went against Nikea. Instead, he allowed others to criticize her, making sure he didn’t do anything to disadvantage himself.

Cowardly bastard, Nikea thought. Her earlier attempts to capture the fiery demihuman was originally a plot to try and convince these people, but as a result, it only made things more difficult.

The goblins’ request was by no means excessive.

At the very least, it was far better than the Nerou Faction's demand to kill the goblins.

The arguments went without any resolve, while Nikea only quietly waited. She waited patiently until they would finally give her an opportunity to speak her thoughts.

When the Nerou Faction, the Neutral Faction, and the small Nikea Faction were finally exhausted, Nikea spoke. "Hear me, descendants of the crystals. I have come to an agreement with them as your chief. To speak against that decision is a challenge to my authority as chief. Moreover—"

Nikea's dignity as chief made the araneae shudder.

"We, descendants of the crystals, came to be because of our trustworthiness and our righteousness. The goblins are here among us in our village precisely because they trust us. To attack them in their sleep, would that not shame our pride!?"

The Nerou Faction had no choice but to keep silent despite their frustrations. The Neutral Faction nodded as they talked among themselves. The members of the Nikea Faction were all smiling, delighted at the greatness of their chief.

"That is all. If there is nothing else, this meeting will be adjourned."

The first to stand up were the Nerou Faction, who left posthaste, followed by the Neutral Faction. The Nikea Faction stayed behind and gathered around Nikea.

"Chief, are you sure this is the right choice?" One of them asked.

"Everything should be fine as long as we don't pull anything. It's just that..." Nikea replied.

"It's just that?" One of them asked.

"If a war breaks out, we will surely lose," Nikea solemnly said.

The members of the Nikea faction looked at each other.

"But..." One of them tried to argue.

"Did you see that goblin? The big black one."

Nikea's voice was gentle, as if to guide them. Her gaze was gentle, much like a mother, as she looked at the araneae who was like a younger brother to her.

"Yes," he said.

"That is their king. He fought the Man-Eating Tiger by himself and won. And those goblins under him. What do you think of them?"

"There were all sorts..."

"Yes, the goblins reproduce quickly. So quickly, in fact, that it's terrifying. More than likely, their main force is waiting somewhere. If a war breaks out, that army would come marching to our doorsteps. Individually, we might have the upper hand, but numerically? They would overwhelm us."

The araneae were speechless at their chief's predictions.

"We have to work with them. This is the only way for our tribe to survive," Nikea said.

The members of her faction all fearfully nodded.

CHAPTER 109

POISON

In the black of the night, spider threads landed on the ground. I thought the only thing I had to worry about were the humans and the elves, but it seems I'll have to look over the reports on the araneae again.

Did I trust Nikea too much?

Araneae fell from the ceiling, wielding short spears, but the shaman, Gi Za Zakuend's, wind took their weapons away. And when they landed on the ground, the ferocious Gi Ba was waiting for them with his three normal goblins.

The araneae screamed as the normal goblins attacked their legs while Gi Ba cut off their arms. There was another araneae approaching from another corner, but Gi Ji Arsil quickly dealt with it with a blow from behind.

"Goblin boss!" Shumea said.

"Stand back," I replied.

There was a secret battle occurring right now in this huge lodging of ours.

The darkness didn't matter much to us goblins, but to the humans and the elves, it was a huge disadvantage. I had Shumea and Selena hide behind me. The araneae that approached them were dealt with by the wind mage, Gi Do's, wind bullets.

"Quite the enthusiastic welcome we have here, Your Majesty," Gi Za said.

I chuckled. "Let us receive them with hospitality then!"

Leaving the approaching araneae from the flanks to my subordinates, I dealt with the araneae before me with a single blow. A closer look at the fallen araneae showed a faint light coming from the area around their eyes.

"Moss?"

I touched it and then examined the glowing moss on my fingers. They were well prepared.

It seems Nikea failed to convince the araneae.

“Try not to kill. I want to know who’s behind them,” I said as I kicked the dying spider.

The goblins wordlessly nodded, reminding me again of how reliable they were.

Well, then... Just how much of the araneae have become hostile, I wonder.

I pondered on the situation as I conserved my strength.



“Chief!” An araneae cried.

That cry was enough to make the entire Nikea faction turn. Nikea drew cold sweat as soon as she saw the desperate expression on the araneae’s face.

“The Nerou Faction attacked the goblins!” The araneae said.

“Impossible!” Nikea said as she immediately ran past the messenger and looked down to the goblins’ lodging from the tallest tree in the village. Hope and despair mingled within her. Perhaps the messenger was mistaken, or then again, perhaps the worst has happened. She didn’t want to look, but her eyes were still drawn to the lodging.

“Nerou...”

Nikea watched the goblins’ lodging as she unconsciously grit her teeth. There were araneae clinging to the roof. When the araneae kicked open the door of the lodging, an araneae was thrown out from inside. The araneae was covered in lacerations, one of its arms was missing, while several of its legs had been cut. When Nikea saw that, she ran faster. She used her eight legs to run vertically down the trees, swinging from tree to tree with her spider threads.

As she quickly approached the ground, she saw from the corner of her eyes the goblins exiting their lodging and her brethren attacking them.

“Sto—” Nikea tried to say, but before she could finish that sentence, her brethren were cut down by blades of wind. By the time she felt the ground pushing against her legs, her brethren were already on the floor, bleeding as they crawled.

“...Ku.”

The battle was decided in the time it took her to land. That was how short the battle was. Despite their powerful bodies, her brethren were defeated just like that.

Those araneae on the ground might not have been warriors, but they were still araneae.

The araneae was one of the physically stronger among the demihumans, and yet... The goblins were beyond them.

How did the goblins defeat them?

She thought hard, trying to find an answer, but in the end, no answer came.

“Don’t move,” a voice sharply said just as she was about to stop the goblins from attacking any further.

“You’re... Gi Ji, yes? I’m not your enemy. Please believe me,” Nikea said.

“That is for the king to decide,” Gi Ji nonchalantly said, though some of his hidden emotions still leaked.

Gi Ji regretted not killing Nikea back when they were dealing with that fiery demihuman. If only he had killed her then, they wouldn’t be in this situation now. Gi Ji’s emotions became a mess as he thought that.

The king’s orders were absolute. Any goblin who served the king knew this. But what if... what if one must disobey the king for his sake? Wouldn’t it be the greatest display of loyalty to serve the king even if one must earn his reprove?

“Let me speak with your king then,” Nikea said.

It was almost as if she spoke to stop him from thinking anything unnecessary. Gi Ji

shook when he heard her voice, the thoughts he was thinking just now quickly vanishing.

“Fine, but you better not pull anything, or else...” Gi Ji warned.

“Thank you.” Nikea said.

Gi Ji led Nikea into their lodging as he kept his blade on her.

Nikea went pale when she saw the scene inside. Several araneae were on the ground, unconscious; each and every single one of them were young. They were all either members of the Nerou Faction or the Neutral Faction.

Nerou must have either tempted or threatened them. Regardless, they were deeply wounded. Like this even more the goblins’ hands would be tainted with even more blood. As Nikea thought that, chills ran up her.

She never thought there was this much of a difference between their races. Nikea’s legs almost quivered. The goblins’ lodging was big, but it didn’t take long before she stood before the king.

“I deeply apologize for this incident,” Nikea said.

“Didn’t you say there wouldn’t be a next time?” Gi Za asked.

Nikea could tell from the corner of her eyes that he was smiling, but she kept her eyes on the king.

There was no one here who would go against the king’s words. As long as the king forgave her, even this goblin would have no choice but to let her off.

Gradually, impatience filled her, so much so that it felt like her chest was on fire as she waited for the king to speak. It wasn’t just her though, as even Gi Za couldn’t keep waiting and asked.

“Your Highness, you wouldn’t mind if I took some of these living araneae, would you?” He brazenly asked in front of Nikea.

When he was about to lay a hand on the fallen araneae, the king finally spoke, “Stop it,

Gi Za.”

Gi Za clearly looked unhappy, but the king avoided his gaze.

“Lord Nikea,” the king said.

There was a majesty and power to his gaze.

“Yes,” Nikea said.

“I’ll get straight to the point, how will you make up for this mess?”

Nikea didn’t know what it would take to receive the king’s pardon. She didn’t have time to know either, as the fallen araneae were inching closer and closer to death by the second, so she gave the most she could offer.

“We shall treat the demon ^{you and your people} children of chaos the same way we treat the elves. We shall treat you as guests of honor.”

To save the young of the village was the chief’s greatest duty. They might have erred tonight, forming factions among themselves and fighting a foolish battle, but in time, surely they too would one day grow up.

“I grow uncertain whether you are truly capable of keeping such promises, Lord Nikea. Know that just as you treasure the people of your village, I too treasure my goblins. I hope you understand that.”

“I do... understand.”

It takes power to unite a tribe.

The king’s words deeply resonated with Nikea. She was a proud araneae who swore to lead her tribe according to her own ideals. There was no future under the leadership of the old-fashioned araneae like Nerou who relied on their lineage.

It was because of that that she became chieftain.

And yet... the reality before her now was this.

Under Nerou's sedition, the araneae attacked the goblins whom they have received as guests. Exactly, who was the filthy race here?

"Very well," the king said.

"Your Majesty!" Gi Za cried, but the king shook his head.

"I will trust you, Lord Nikea," the king said. "But this truly will be the last. If anything else happens after this, we shall welcome the araneae not as friends but as slaves."

"At that time, I shall give you my life."

In any case, with this the goblins have shown their good will.

Their king wished for them to live together as equals.

"Then if you'd excuse me, there is somewhere I need to be."

After Nikea felt the sword pointed at her be drawn back, she left. The wounded araneae needed to be treated as soon as possible.

She selected the sensible from her faction and sent them to the goblins' lodging.

But there was yet work to be done.

Sharp talons came out of Nikea's fingertips as the hair on her legs angrily stood up in the green hue of poison.



The araneae glanced fearfully at the goblins from time to time as they carried their wounded out of the lodging. When they were all gone, Gi Za blew up.

"Soft, soft! Too soft, Your Highness!" He said.

"Don't get so mad," I said, wryly smiling.

Even Gi Ji who usually kept his thoughts to himself spoke. "Please pardon me for this,

Your Majesty, but I do believe that you were being too soft.”

It seems they really do think that I was too soft. But is that really the case?

“Do you really think Nikea will be able to quietly take control of this village?” I asked, but the goblins just looked puzzled.

I explained. “Judging from the way Nikea acted a while ago, it should be safe to assume that she doesn’t have full control of this village.”

The noble class goblins nodded.

I continued. “Moreover, the people going against her are quite influential. They disobeyed her for the second time, after all.”

The first was when those two araneae followed us. The second is this recent incident.

“Now, let me ask you a question. What would you do to avoid any future troubles?” I asked.

“...Are you saying this was all meant to incite discord?” Gi Za asked.

I nodded. “With this we’ll be able to watch from the sidelines as they eat each other up.”

“Weren’t you planning to receive the descendants of the crystals as friends?” Selena timidly asked in hushed voices, but there was anger reflected upon her eyes.

The goblins all turned to her when she spoke. As soon as they did, the elf hid behind Shumea. Although she’d gotten quite friendly, it seems she didn’t really respect me.

“Right, as friends,” I said. “But whether they value that proposition is something they will be proving from now on.”

Will they take my hand? Or will they bare their fangs?

“But, well...”

Friends would be best. I’ll even support her a little. Time is limited. Who knows how

far this forest stretches? The more friends we have, the stronger we will be.

“As expected of our king,” Gi Za said.

I wryly smiled. “Let us prepare then.”

“Prepare?” Shumea suspiciously asked.

My wry smile grew bigger. “If they intend to be friends, it wouldn’t hurt to gain their favor. And if they intend to fight, then we should get rid of them as soon as possible.”

“Boss, you’re not the honest type, huh,” Shumea chuckled as she patted Selena on the head.

We got an araneae to lead us out of our lodging.



Gi Za’s level has risen.

43 => 45

Gi Do’s level has risen.

60 => 63

Gi Ji’s level has risen.

3 => 7

Gi Ba’s level has risen.

1 => 10

CHAPTER 110

OLD BLOOD, NEW BLOOD

Status	
Race	Goblin
Level	45
Class	King; Ruler
Possessed Skills	Ruler of the Demon Children of Chaos; Defiant Soul; World Devouring Howl; Sword Mastery A-; Dominator; King's Soul; Ruler's Wisdom III; Household of the Gods; One-Eyed Snake's Evil Eye; The King's Dance at the Edge of Death; Magic Manipulation; Soul of the Berserk King; Third Impact (The Third Chant); Instinct; Blessing of the Underworld Goddess
Divine Protection	Goddess of the Underworld (Altesia)
Attributes	Darkness; Death
Subordinate Beasts	High Kobold Hasu (Lv77); Gastra (Lv20); Cynthia (Lv20); Orc King (Bui) (Lv82)
Abnormal Status	Blessing of the One-Eyed Snake; Protection of the Twin-Headed Snake

“Oh, if it isn’t the esteemed chief. To what do we owe the honor of this visit?”

The man responsible behind the anti-Nikea sentiments, Nerou, lived in the western part of the village. The lands he owned were vast, being someone whose lineage traced back to many generations. The fact he lived in the western part, closest to the elves who were also in the same direction, was proof of his proud araneae blood.

This arrangement of the araneae village was because of the deep gratitude they felt to the elves, who quickly responded to them in their darkest hour. Their decision to live atop trees strung together by their threads was also because of their gratitude.

The Nerou Estate was built up slowly over the years, each tree carefully planted. The precise gap between each tree was proof of just how powerful and deep Nerou’s lineage went.

“You should know why I’m here,” Nikea said.

Despite those dangerous words, Nerou sneered back. “You came because of the goblins, I suppose.”

“Obviously!” Nikea angrily said.

Nerou calmly spoke. “I don’t understand why you treat them so favorably, but...”

Nerou’s followers neared him to speak out words of complaints in accordance to Nerou’s own thoughts.

“Why did you let them into this village?” Said one.

“Do you see those disgusting things as equals of us proud descendants of the crystals!? You must be insane!” Said another.

Nikea’s followers spoke back against the jeers.

“If you don’t want to obey the chief, leave!” Said one of Nikea’s followers.

When it seemed like a battle of words would begin, Nikea ordered them to stop.

“Stop,” she said.

Although she spoke only a little louder than normal, for someone like her who rarely spoke from the start, those words carried a power that was enough to silence her faction.

“What!? Are you unable to respond now that the truth has come to light? After all, you’re nothing more than a commoner without a drop of noble blood!” Said another member of Nerou’s faction.

The members of Nerou’s faction kept adding oil to the flames, so much so that even Nerou felt that things were getting out of hand.

“Wait, I think that’s going a bit too—” Nerou tried to stop them, but even he could not stop his own faction from spouting insults at their chief.

It was around this time that he saw a shadow from the corner of his eyes.

It was Nikea. By the time Nerou saw the color of her talons, one of his follower's head had already fallen.

It was unfortunate, but they had forgotten one terrifying fact. The chief that stood before them was in fact a distinguished warrior of their tribe. It was easy to forget with Nikea's quiet personality, but her power was the real thing, such that she was even known by a second name: Poison Feather.

"It doesn't matter if they curse at me... They will all be dying tonight, anyway." Nikea's voice was colder than ice as she attacked Nerou and his followers. She was not one to let slip an opening. Her talons which she killed with, dripped with poison, a kind of poison that could paralyze.

"Nikea..." Nero tried to say something, but Nikea, who seemed to have lost all emotions, nonchalantly spoke over him.

"The goblins were attacked just now. You should have never tricked our young, Nerou. To forsake one's duty and use his own family as pawns... That is a sin too grave to pardon."

Nikea glared at Nerou's followers, and they quickly turned away. Nerou turned around and sighed for a moment before looking Nikea in the eye.

"Do you know your mistake, Nerou of the blue crystal?" Nikea asked.

"I suppose..."

He seemed to have resigned himself, but when he shook his head, his followers tried to step in. Only, they were stopped by Nikea's glare.

"...But I share my faction's stance. I am against allying with the goblins."

Nikea's brows rose when she heard this man actually speak out his own opinion.

"We should live peacefully in the forest," Nerou said. "But you, who is as passionate as fire, keeps trying to lead us down a different path. That goblin is the same, I'm sure..."

We are the ^{Goulen}defeated. The gods have already abandoned us,” Nerou said.

“No, we aren’t over yet! There isn’t a parent in this world who does not love his own child!” Nikea passionately said.

“It’s ironic,” Nerou laughed. “In the end, it was fresh blood, like yourself, who was blessed with the araneae spirit.”

Nerou’s followers were speechless as he cast his eyes downward. It was a first for him to expose his emotions so clearly. Usually, he was always smiling and at leisure, never truly stressed or anguished, but in the end, that mask backfired on him, and he lost the position of chief to Nikea.

“But it’s too late now... I suppose I should have talked with you properly once.” Nerou said as he noticed the black goblin from a distance.

“Indeed... I too regret that,” Nikea said.

The bitter smile that rose upon Nerou’s lips was as elegant as ever.

Suddenly, Nikea’s arms swung and Nerou’s head fell.

Shortly after, his nearby followers’ heads also fell.

“Bi—” One of the remaining followers tried to scream out, but an araneae of the Nikea Faction threw a spear at him before he could. With his throat pierced, he was powerless to stop Nikea.

Nikea’s arms dripped with poison as they swung like feathers. Standing with four of her legs, she used the other four to shoot threads at the enemy, while the poison dripped from her finger tips onto the threads to paralyze them.

Renowned as Poison Feather, Nikea was a skilled araneae warrior whom even her own tribe feared.

After suppressing everyone around her, she took Nerou’s freshly severed head.

“...Pitiful Nerou, your sacrifice won’t be in vain. I will restore our glory. One day, the

light shall once again shine upon us, descendants of the crystals.”

As she gently closed her eyes, she kissed Nerou’s freshly severed head, then she turned to her faction.

“The leader of the traitors has been executed! Judgment will be passed upon the remaining colluders!”

The araneae prostrated themselves before the ground in response to the chief’s authority.

“This issue is settled. From here on out, any disrespect to our guests will not be forgiven.”

With this Nikea had finally taken complete control of the village.



I watched as Nikea took down the leader of the traitors.

“It seems they’ve reached a conclusion,” I said.

“Mu... That’s no fun,” Gi Ba complained as he fiddled with his sword.

“Hmm... I seem to have unjustly looked down on that woman,” Gi Za thoughtfully said with a difficult expression.

“With this they won’t attack us anymore, right?” Shumea nonchalantly asked.

“Most likely,” I nodded. “Well, in any case, this is one problem solved,”

Shumea smiled as she rubbed Selena’s head. “That’s a good thing, right, Boss?”

Right, after all, with this we’ve successfully made friends with a tribe, giving us a foothold in the west.

As we were talking among ourselves, Nikea approached, carrying the enemy’s head in her hands. Her eyes seemed to be wet with tears.

“King of Goblins, with this we’ve shown you our sincerity.”

“That you have. From here on our races shall be friends.”

Nodding, Nikea calmly walked away. The intimidating aura she emanated caused even Gi Ji, who carried much animosity toward her, to back off.

“What will you be doing with that head?” I asked.

“If you ask for it, I could give it to you, but... The people of the village are my family. I would like to mourn for him.”

Her hands, dyed in the blood of her own family, carefully lifted up the head of the traitor.

“I see... Do that then.”

“Thank you.”

As she vanished into the distance, Selena muttered, “She looked really sad.”

Nikea’s vanishing back seemed to carry a great burden.

It was as if it was saying she could no longer stop. For if she stopped even a moment, she would surely be crushed.



Lately, Gastra’s been bringing all sorts of things.

From kittens to pups, even the adult dogs trained in the army, or the white tiger cubs that were raised for royalty.

Miss Lili says we should properly discipline him, but we’re still talking about it.

Well, the animals he brings back are cute, so I guess it’s fine, but his lack of boundaries is really surprising.

Reshia thought to herself as she held Gastra and looked at the figure sitting before her.

“Lady Reshia, rumors of your person have been spreading quite far lately.”

Exchanges such as this have been occurring a lot lately.

While it was well and good that word of her healing people had spread, she was essentially under house arrest, only able to go out to town once a month and only with an escort of guards. A few days ago, she tried going to the orphanage without permission, but as a result, people spoke ill of King Ashtal.

From then on, she’s been kept under tight watch. Then as if the influential merchants and nobles were waiting for this opportunity, they had meetings with her scheduled.

From what she’s heard it seems they paid a good sum of money just to meet her.

—I’m not something to be shown around though.

Despite feeling embarrassed, she played along anyway and paid attention to the merchant before her. But with the conversation going nowhere, she couldn’t help but sigh.

The merchant noticed that, so he changed the topic.

“By the way, Lady Reshia, have you heard of the scarlet maiden?”

“No, I’m not privy to the rumors outside the castle.”

The merchant was elated to see Reshia show some interest, so he shared the rumors he’s heard.

The scarlet maiden was a knight who could use the cursed sword of the royal family.

The scarlet maiden would soon be appointed holy knight.

The scarlet maiden would become a grand hero in the footsteps of the great hero, Gulland.

The scarlet maiden would appear in the battlefield and rake in achievement after achievement.

“She sounds amazing,” Reshia said.

“Indeed. In fact, there are plenty of rumors going around that she’s going to become holy knight soon. It seems she would be sent to the north as well to quell the bandits,” the merchant said.

Come to think of it, Reshia thought, she hasn’t been seen Lili lately because of some business she had to do in the north. They haven’t met for two weeks already, in fact. It seems King Ashtal had something he wanted her to deliver.

Reshia hated the fact that she couldn’t openly go against King Ashtal.

She sighed at the short ceiling above her that cut her off from the vast blue sky.

CHAPTER 111

MERCHANT

The different demihuman tribes lived in their own villages in their own lands within the forest.

“Greetings, I am the King of the Goblins.”

Kneeling before me was a member of the winged ones. There was much distance between the countless villages of the demihumans; going to and fro a village could not be done in a short time.

The first problem the demihumans needed to deal with to create their republic was the communication between their villages.

Their solution was this merchant before me, the winged ones.

“It’s an honor to meet you, Your Highness. I am Yushika, a member of the tribe of the ^{Harpies} winged ones.”

By chance, a merchant happened to pass by the araneae village, so I asked Nikea to introduce me.

The harpies were a nomadic race responsible for bridging communication between the various demihumans. They were also merchants responsible for distributing various special goods.

For example, the threads of the araneae, the fangs produced by the ^{Werewolves} Fang Tribe, the jewels mined by the ^{Rizalats} Long-Tailed Tribe, the wooden crafts of the ^{Papirsag} Shell Tribe, or the iron works of the ^{Centaurs} Man-Horse Tribe. The various demihuman tribes traded their special goods for the other tribes’ special goods.

Other than those tribes, there’s also the ^{Tarpidae} Mud-Scaled Tribe, who can go to places the

harpies can't easily reach with their wings, or the eccentric Man-Bull Tribe.^{Minotaurs}

"Likewise," I nodded. "I believe there'll be plenty of opportunities for us to work together."

"More customers is always a pleasure," she smiled, bowing as she bent the white wings behind her back and the talons of her feet. The way she carefully held the bag dangling from her chest with her two arms reminded me of a mother holding her baby.

"By the way, Your Highness," she said. "How far do you intend to go?"

Her smile quickly changed into one of cunningness.

"If you'd like I could show you the way," she said.

But then Nikea suddenly interjected. "Don't tease our guest too much, first feather of the descendants of the crystal."

Nikea looked intimidating with her arms folded and her brows furrowed.

"You surprised me," Yushika said. "I didn't think the araneae seriously intended to be their friends."

"We are faithful to our words... King of Goblins, I advise you not to trust her too much. Her kind is known to play mischief on people."

It seems she was planning on leading us astray.

"Oh? That would be troubling," I said.

"...For the record, I still am the chief of the harpies," Yushika said when she sensed my displeasure. "In any case, as I mentioned awhile ago, I'll deliver anything you want delivered as long as proper compensation is given."

Yushika sweetly smiled as she left my side.

"I would like to hold the Eight-Flag Meeting. Can you send word to the other tribes?" Nikea said.

“...Hasn’t Gurfia’s dream ended?” Yushika asked.

The demihuman of the flames... His name was Gurfia.

“I haven’t given up yet. Compensation has also been paid. I’m not backing off,” Nikea insisted.

“If you insist,” Yushika said. “We have to think of a countermeasure anyway, and there’s also the matter afterwards...” Yushika said. After which she turned to me to bid goodbye, then she spread her big white wings and flew away.

Riding on the strong gales of the skies, she flew up above, beyond the tall trees of the village, and then in the blink of an eye, her figure became as small as an ant’s.

“Harpy, huh,” I muttered.

Gi Za could fly temporarily, but only temporarily. A long flight is impossible. The harpies’ ability to fly is indeed a unique skill.

What a fortunate thing it would be if I could annex all of the demihumans.



There were 8 days until the meeting of the demihumans could begin. Apparently, according to the harpy, Yushika’s, report, it would take that long for everyone to gather, so I took the opportunity and went on a walk with my goblin subordinates.

Speaking of which, I sent Gi Ji Arsil back to the fortress to call for more goblins. It took much effort to acquire the araneae village, so it only makes sense that I strengthen it.

After sending Gi Ji, a young araneae by the name of Rukenon led us outside the village.

“What beasts lurk around here?” I asked.

But then Gi Za suddenly spoke. “I have some business I’d like to deal with.”

The goblin seemed to have something on mind, so we left him and continued on with our guide.

The nemesis of the araneae, the rock frogs, and the blood-sucking butterflies were renowned as fiendish beasts, but aside from those, it seems there weren't a lot of high level beasts lurking the area anymore.

The demihumans have been hunting most of the threats in the surrounding area, so as a result, there were barely any left now. It's only natural, I suppose. It would be much easier to live in an area if there were no threats, after all.

The rocky frogs had tawny skin covered with a slippery membrane. They usually moved groups, so when we came across one, there was an army with it.

There were two big rocky frogs leading the army of rocky frogs. I noticed there were several among them with tails about the size of one's palm.

When I asked about it, I found out that those rocky frogs with tails were the younger ones. Apparently, the tails were extremely nutritious and delicious.

I spurred on my subordinate goblins as I used this opportunity to train them.

Cynthia, who was sitting on my shoulders, also seemed excited, but when she fought the little rocky frogs, she had a hard time.

Did I spoil her too much?

Well, it should be fine as long as I have her hunt by herself for a while.

Thinking that, I let Cynthia hunt by herself. I told the other goblins not to help her out too.

We were already cleaning up by the time Cynthia finally managed to defeat a baby rocky frog and brought its corpse before me. The ones who dealt with the two big rocky frogs were Gi Do, Gi Ba, and the three normal goblins under Gi Ba.

I distributed the best parts of the meat to them.

The normal goblins under Gi Ba will evolve soon. It's good that they're growing well, but what should I do about their names?



I thought I could finally put my heart at ease after that scary goblin left, but... sigh.

After fixing the village the humans attacked, we started work on its expansion.

“Bui, where to put this?”

Since that day, the other orcs have been seeing me in a new light. As expected, a strong leader like Master Gol Gol is a ray of hope to them.

When I was about to walk over to where Gui and the others were, a voice called from under me.

“Food,” a kobold said as it bit on my legs.

“It hurts, Hasu!” I cried.

“Not for me. Food!” Hasu said.

You’re missing the point! And didn’t I just feed you a triple boar awhile ago!?

When that scary goblin told me he would give me the southern area, I agreed after weighing the risks against the profits. Thanks to that, we were able to secure this bountiful lake, which greatly increased our food supplies. The only threats in the area were the giant spiders, but we could easily deal with them by having several orcs work together just like that goblin does.

Everything was going well... Except for one thing!

When I went south, I met these kobolds who are biting my feet now.

They were originally under the care of that goblin, so I was planning on taking care of them in his stead, but when I saw their leader, Hasu, I instantly got the feeling that she was someone I wouldn’t be able to deal with.

The moment we met, her eyes sparkled and her mouth dripped with saliva.

According to the food chain, I’m supposed to be above her, but for some reason, I

couldn't deal... No, to be honest, I find her really scary!

I gave them a little bit of food when we first met, but she wasn't satisfied, so she got her friends to circle around us, and they barked at us to give them food. It was so scary! I thought I was going to be traumatized!

I told them I didn't have any food and made a run for it, but they followed me!

The other orcs saw me, but they just laughed, saying, "Hah! Are you serving the kobolds now, Bui? As expected of our great leader!"

They think this is a joke, but considering how strong this kobold seems, this is actually dangerous!

I'm not really sure why, but I keep imagining this thing stronger than me.

It's not all bad though, I admit. The kobolds report to us as long as we feed them, and the information they bring helps us hunt better.

"Bui, stop playing with the kobolds and help!" One of the orcs who evolved in the last battle, Gui, yelled.

"Food!" The kobolds cried as they bit me.

To be honest, it doesn't really hurt, but mentally speaking it's really scary.

"I have some beans here..." I said.

"Meat!" They demanded as they whipped the beans away with their tails.

I scratched my head, not knowing what to do with these selfish kobolds. In the end, I decided to take out some emergency rations I had with me. It was a paltry amount, but Hasu sunk her teeth into it anyway even though she whipped them away at first with her tail. When I saw her take the bait, I ran away.

We're in the middle of expanding the village. With plenty of food and no enemies to threaten us, our race naturally flourished. Our females could birth several babies at a time. They're not like the females of the goblins who could only birth one at a time. Our females could birth even 10 babies at the same time.

Babies, small orcs that could fit the palm of one's hand. After 60 days, their fangs would sprout, and they would become full-fledged adults.

We grow a lot slower compared to the goblins, and our females need to rest for a year after giving birth, so we can't reproduce as fast.

Regardless, I think babies are cute.

If all the babies grow up, we won't be able to fit in the village anymore. That's why we're expanding. Everyone agreed too, so I'm not just forcing my opinion on others. On top of expanding, we're also changing the position of the ditch and strengthening the fence, so when the humans come attack we'll be able to defend. We're also digging pitfalls just like the goblins did in the past.

Master Gol Gol would send an orc east whenever one was born, but I don't think that's very effective. If I did that to a newborn orc, it might just end up biting me in the heel. Besides, if that scary goblin were to find a new orc village, he would probably just destroy it.

So that leaves two choices.

I could keep expanding this village or send a small group of orcs to found a new village. They'll have to be very small, so they don't pick a fight with me later, though.

Right now, we have lots of food, so there shouldn't be any problem raising more orcs. One day, though, a new force might rise among our ranks, who will lead the younger orcs.

I need to ensure that the orcs grow up accustomed to living together as a horde.

If I show them the benefits of living together, such as the efficiency of hunting together or the benefits of structures we could build together, I'm sure they would naturally prefer living together as one horde.

"Gui, let's move that tree's roots to this rock over here. And Goi, please mow the area near Doralia."

When I turned around after giving orders, I saw something horrifying.

It was Hasu.

...It seems peace is still but a far-fetched dream.



Gi Ba's level has risen.

10 => 18

Gi Do's level has risen.

63 => 67

Cynthia's level has risen.

20 => 30

CHAPTER 112

SCARLET MAIDEN

I spent the days until the meeting either hunting or talking to Nikea.

Most of it was me trying to convince her to allow the goblins free passage. Originally, we wanted to expand, but with no contact in the west, the path to the elves couldn't be maintained.

There's also the war with the humans. It's necessary to have free passage, so as to easily be able to muster troops from the demihumans. I used the threat of the humans to swing her opinion to my side. I told her of their great influence, of how they cut down the forest, and of how strong their country was.

Nikea's expression gradually changed for the worse.

"The human threat is real. It would be best to work with me." I was like a serpent whispering at her ears.

Except for that one incident with Gene, Nikea and her people haven't crossed swords with the humans for over a hundred years. At that time, they lost countless times because of their failure to unite themselves, only winning once at the end.

But now, a threat greater than that approaches.

"If it weren't for us, goblins, the humans would have already reached you," I said.

That was no more than a prediction, but it was most likely what would have happened. That human commander was really greedy for more land.

"...It's hard to believe all these all of the sudden," Nikea said.

"Then you should see for yourself what has happened to the east. Selena can speak for us too. She saw our battle with the humans."

Nikea turned to Selena, a member of the elven race whom the demihumans held in

esteem. "Is this true?"

Selena nodded and Nikea's brows furrowed.

"We have spent the past decades, bridging the gap between our races. We had to, lest we wished to invite a rebellion. Yet it seems the humans won't even let us do that," Nikea sorrowfully said as she closed her eyes. "King of Goblins, what is it that you wish of us?"

Filled with resolve, she looked me in the eyes.

"I wish to borrow the strength of the descendants of the crystals to create my country," I answered.

"You want us to fight as your soldiers?" Nikea asked.

"To fight with us, side-by-side as friends, not as slaves. I have no intentions of harming you. I only wish to defeat the humans and build up my country."

"Please give me time to think."

The impending threat of the humans was inevitable. They would have to face them eventually, one way or another, and to go against them alone was a fool's errand. Of course, there was always the possibility of the demihumans uniting themselves to battle the humans, but... the odds of that happening were exceedingly low.

—Because Gurfia's dream has long ended.

The centaur who once tried to unite the demihumans was corrupted by the very humans he sought to destroy, and in the end, burned up in his own flames. Ever since then, the demihumans have been floating aimlessly, not knowing what to do with their incomplete union.

It was at such a time that we came, the mighty goblins of the east.

Nikea knows that the goblins are stronger than the demihumans.

The hate of the demihumans is the real deal. That araneae's hate toward Shumea wasn't just for show. Hence, there is no way the demihumans would ever accept defeat

in the humans' hands.

Nikea will have to make a choice. Whether to rely on the demihumans' failed republic... or me.

Someone as smart as her should already know, yet she still asks to be given time to think. Is it because of her disdain for the goblins that she is unable to accept the truth? Or because of her pride as a demihuman?

Regardless, I have given my proposition. What happens next is up to her.

Standing up from my seat, I called out to the goblins who did not join the hunt for the day.

If she does refuse, the goblins summoned from the fortress will have work to do.



Atop snowy plains where cold winds blew were flowers of red.

As red as the hair of that valiant female knight who stood alone at the center of it all.

“GURUuUUu.” Snow wolves growled as they approached her.

Behind the snow wolves was a barbarian, riding on a white elephant as he charged toward her. That white elephant was about three times the woman's height. It had sharpened ivories for tusks, but even without them, the weight of that white elephant was enough to crush the woman flat.

Despite that, the woman calmly stood in its path.

Her red hair swayed under the blow of the cold winds.

As her breath turned white, she quietly uttered a few words.

Slash
“Tear them apart, tail of the s”

The weapon in her hands shook. It was shaped like a whip, but it was definitely a

sword. The sound of metal resounded as the consolidation of countless blades swung. Yes, that was none other than the cursed sword of the royal family, the Vashinant.

Wolves came at the female knight from both of her sides. Vashinant turned to them. The instant they leapt, true to its name, Sky-Splitter^{Vashinant} literally tore through the sky. In a stroke, two new flowers bloomed on the snow-white plains, and then the woman pointed Vashinant at the white elephant before her.

“RURUuRARARAAIII!” The barbarian cried out as he charged on elephantback toward the red-haired knight. He held a throwing spear in his hands, but he could not throw it in time, for the same sword that cut the snow wolves in half pierced him from the back. In the same moment, blood gushed out from the elephant’s feet.

A thunderous sound erupted as the white elephant fell to the ground. The man on its back, half-dead, spoke only one word before blood gushed out and his head came off.

“Diablo...” That was the man’s last word.

Wiping the blood off her, the female knight called back the swords that were gathered around her like a coiling snake, and then she swung her blade, bringing it back to its normal shape.

“Diablo, huh.”

Lili’s voice disappeared into the cold winds.



In the seemingly endless winter of the snow god’s^{Yggdrasill} mountain, up in the northern borders of the Germion Kingdom, were an endless war and the barbarians known as Yugushiva.

The hero, Gulland, was dispatched to the ever despairing north with his soldiers in hopes of quelling the unending war. But his soldiers alone could not fight a battle. They needed weapons, food, and a place to rest.

The country decided to supply those things through a colonial city known as Colonia, which both acted as the soldiers’ place of rest and a fortress that protected them from

their enemies. Naturally, it was well defended, being something which exerted much pressure on the region.

The roads of the city stretched on endlessly, tearing through where there were forests and passing over as bridges where there were waters. Built up by the blood and sweat of countless men, these roads were humanity's pride.

In pursuit of self-sufficiency, fences made out of wood around the region, as if to demarcate the boundaries which separated the lesser from the greater. The colonial city was a sight so stunning anyone who saw it for the first time would gasp.

That was especially so for the descendants of the other races, who would find their hometowns shameful when compared to the glory of this colonial city.

It was in that very city that Lili visited a farmer's family.

"I'm back," she said.

"Welcome home. You're not hurt, right?" Bern and Neumann said.

They were both humans Lili once lived with in the village of the king. After Lili patted the snow off her overcoat, she smiled at them.

"Yes, I take it nothing's changed here either?" Lili said.

"Everything's as usual... For better or for worse," Neumann bitterly smiled, while Bern scratched his head and apologized.

"I'm sorry," Lili said. "I thought I'd be able to help, but..."

After they were rescued from the goblin village with Reshia, King Ashtal sent them all over the country to different colonial cities. Chinos was sent to the east, Mattis to the south, while Bern and Neumann were sent to the north. The others too were sent to various different places. Everyone was sent somewhere different.

In fact, Bern and Neumann were also sent to different places. It just so happened that Neumann, who was stationed near the capital, pined for Lili, and Bern, who became a soldier to keep his family from starving, was sent to the cruel cold of the north.

After Lili heard of their wretched situation after they delivered a package to Gulland, Lili dropped by to check on them. From then on, she would visit them whenever she went to the north.

Recently, Lili has asked them to investigate the source of the rumors surrounding her.

Though Lili still hasn't given her answer, after King Ashtal revealed to her the history of her lineage and asked her to serve the country, rumors meant to help her ascension to the rank of holy knight had been spreading as if they were true.

"It's fine. If it's to support my family, a little hardship is nothing," Bern said.

"Ah, Lili!" Mill said, sweeping away the solemn atmosphere.

"That's Miss Lili to you," Bern reprimanded.

"It's alright. I don't mind," Lili said.

Mill had always been a mischievous boy even back during their time in the village. That hasn't changed even now.

"Hey, hey, did you bring some candies?" Mill asked.

"Hey, Mill!" Bern reprimanded, prompting the boy to hide behind Lili.

"How about these?" Lili asked as she took out some candies.

"Yay! Thank you!" Mill said.

"I'm really sorry about this," Bern said with his head bowed.

Lili waved his apology away as she hid her own embarrassment. "You don't have to apologize. I'm just doing whatever I can while I'm still here."

"Thank you," Bern said. He must have been struggling a lot, as his voice sounded exhausted.

"Lately, I've been looking fondly back at our time in the village," Neumann said. "There were scary times too, sure, but at least, no one was hungry."

“Now that you mention it,” Bern agreed. “Those were fond memories. Even though we didn’t spend much time there...”

“The people around here are all weaklings compared to those green bros!” Mill said as he licked his lollipop, prompting Lili, Neumann, and Bern to chuckle.

Three days later, Lili left the north.

The endless winter that imprisoned the mountains of the snow god was still continuing.

The breath that left her mouth was white and cold.

Though she felt like she was being strangled, Lili set out on a trip back to the capital.

CHAPTER 113

TALPIDAE PRINCESS

Cynthia bore her fangs into the hard shell of the rock crab, pinning it down under her two front legs as she tore out one of its pincers. Sounds of crunching could be heard from the rock crab, but Cynthia was relentless. The rock crab tried to attack with its remaining pincer, but Cynthia leapt behind it and rammed herself into it, sending it flying into a nearby tree.

The rock crab fainted, Cynthia calmly walked over to finish off her prey. There was an elegance and dignity to the way she walked. That was something she's always had about her even when she was younger. Cynthia pinned down the unconscious rock crab, when suddenly the rock crab's remaining pincer snapped at her.

Surprised, Cynthia tried to jump back, but the pincer held firmly to her leg, causing her to lose her balance and fall. As the rock crab stood back up, it lifted Cynthia up in the air, where she hung down helplessly. In a desperate attempt to break free, Cynthia used her free foreleg to scratch at the crab, but unable to muster any decent power, the most she could accomplish was a shallow wound.

As Cynthia struggled, the rock crab twisted its body and slammed Cynthia into the ground. Grass covered the ground, but that was not enough of a cushion to shield Cynthia from the pain. Ample damage was dealt.

After slamming her into the ground 5 times, the rock crab was about to leave, but...

"GURUuuRUuU," Cynthia angrily growled.

Cynthia was not done yet, so the rock crab reassumed its fighting stance.

Cynthia might have been taken by surprise a while ago, but though a pup, she was still a gray wolf. The odds of losing in a straight up fight was essentially nil.

The rock crab's remaining pincer went for Cynthia's neck, but Cynthia calmly dodged it, and then she tore it off.

With no pincers left to fight with, the rock crab tried to run, but Cynthia's mouth was already on its head before it could even try.

Cynthia's powerful jaw forced her fangs deep into the crab's head, causing bodily liquids to burst out of the poor crab's head.

Lately, we've been hunting in an area some distance away from the araneae village. There wasn't much left to hunt around the village and my talks with Nikea have come to a close, so there wasn't any reason not to hunt somewhere deeper.

Besides, if we hunted in one place too much, the araneae might be negatively affected. It would be bad if we did anything to sow ill-feelings between us.

Ruknon, the araneae Nikea sent with us, also thought it would be best to hunt elsewhere, so he pointed us to go deeper into the west, where stronger, more vicious beasts lurked. It was there that we met the rock crabs.

Being small, about roughly Cynthia's size, I thought fighting one would be a good match for her, but the battle proved difficult. It wasn't because Cynthia was weak, however, but because she was inexperienced. She had the advantage for the majority of the fight until the end, where her carelessness allowed the rock crab to do a number on her.

Though she managed to win in the end, Cynthia walked back with drooped ears. That didn't last for long however, for as soon as I patted her on the head, her ears stood straight back up and her tail happily wagged.

I smiled at that.

"We have defeated the enemy, Your Highness," the ferocious Gi Ba said.

After Cynthia hopped onto my shoulders, I looked up, and I saw the rock crabs being gutted.

"Let's return then," I said.

We went back to the araneae village with all the rock crabs in tow. Ruknon's face seemed to be cramping, but I ignored it. It would only be to my advantage if he

reported the things he saw today. If he reported to Nikea how just five goblins seem enough of a threat, perhaps she would stop thinking unnecessary things.

The law of the jungle reigns supreme yet.

I'll just use it to my advantage then.

I'll unite the demihumans under one flag, force the elves under my will, and then encroach into the domain of man.



The Talpidae were closest to the araneae village, hence it took only five days for their chief to arrive.

"A descendant of the dark crystal, the Sharpest Claw, Lord Fanfan," Nikea introduced.

"My name is Fanfan. Greetings, guest," the talpidae slightly nodded.

Brown fur covered the talpidae's small body. Nikea might have been particularly tall, but the fact that the talpidae stood no higher than her hips proved just how small the talpidae was. The talpidae's arms and legs were also overdeveloped with claws sharpened seemingly for war. If one were to describe the talpidae's appearance in a few words, the talpidae could be said to look just like a mole.

The talpidae, Fanfan, looked curiously at me with her – she is a woman, right? I mean her name is Fanfan, so... – two round eyes, scratching her tall nose as she did.

Then she turned to Nikea. "I heard there was someone you wished to introduce... Frankly, I'm a bit surprised..."

Nikea's brows furrowed, but Fanfan brought her face to hers.

"But, it's alright... Race... doesn't matter," she said.

"Huh?" Nikea asked.

Then Fanfan desperately grabbed at Nikea's hands, which hovered above her head, and nodded several times.

“Lord Nikea, I’ll support you!”

Nikea tilted her head, puzzled, but Fanfan’s eyes were sparkling.

“I-I see... Thank you.”

“Yes. Well then!”

Fanfan seemed to be quite excited as she left.

Nikea was all smiles as she spoke to me. “How fortunate. It’s a bit troubling that I can’t tell what Lord Fanfan likes about you, but her support will prove to be invaluable.”

‘Her’. So she **was** a female.

“Are all the talpidae like that?”

“Hmm? They are merchants just like the harpies. They are well-informed and are able to swim through soil. They’ve also developed techniques to report—”

“You realize...”

What I was about to say was something really difficult to point out, but it had to be done.

“What’s the matter? It’s rare for you to be so reserved,” Nikea asked, so I went out with it in one breath.

“You realize Lord Fanfan thinks you’re introducing me as your fiancé, right?” I quickly said.

Immediately, Nikea froze.

You know... if you react that badly, even I won’t have any other response but to quietly sigh.

“If you have any intentions of... revising her perception of our relationship, you might want to—”

“Lord Fanfan!!” Nikea yelled as she bolted off like a hare in pursuit of the talpidae princess.

According to Rukenon, that was the first time she’s ever been so panicked.



After Nikea cleared up the misunderstanding, we met again.

“Oh, that’s too bad,” Fanfan said. “But I think there’s still a chance.”

That was the first time such words have been said to my face. I’m not sure if she’s brave or just dumb, but... Hmm... I wonder if there’s a reason why she’s so friendly to a goblin.

“You sure are friendly,” I said.

Fanfan chuckled. “Please don’t misunderstand, guest. I’m not that friendly, I just happen to have a set of beliefs I adhere to.”

What a friendly tribe. It would be best not to make an enemy out of them. This is the first time a tribe has treated the goblins ‘normally’, after all.

“It doesn’t matter whether it’s a goblin or human, as long as there’s a male and a female, love can bloom. The bigger the obstacles, the stronger the love! Those are the kinds of people I, Fanfan, support!”

...What am I supposed to say to this? Do I thank her?

I glanced at Nikea, but she had this look on her face that seemed to say, ‘Don’t even think of pushing her onto me.’

Am I supposed to deal with this by myself?

Somehow it feels like I’m in a predicament worse than when I was fighting that fiery demihuman.

“Anyway, it’s nice to meet you. Let’s get along.” I said in hopes of building a good

relationship with the talpidae.

“But of course! I’m rooting for you, after all!” She said.

I have no idea what she’s talking about anymore.

Isn’t there something I can use to get out of this!?

I looked around me in pursuit of a way out, but aside from Nikea, who was currently polishing up on her acting by acting like she didn’t exist, the only thing left was the tasteless landscape.

—Damn it! There’s nothing! Nothing at all!”

Suddenly, a report came in.

“Chief, Lord Luther of the Papirsag has arrived,” the messenger said.

“Oh, good timing. Let him in,” Nikea said.

Nikea and I sighed in relief.

Fanfan went quiet as reports of various chieftains arriving came.



Cynthia’s level has risen.

30 => 45

Gi Ba’s level has risen.

18 => 24

Gi Do’s level has risen.

67 => 71

CHAPTER 114

EIGHT FLAGS MEETING

The people gathered in the room were all quite different from humans.

I've already been acquainted with Nikea of the araneae, Yushika of the harpies, and Fanfan of the talpidae, but there was more to come, and the names and peculiarities of the people that came after was truly as one would expect from a demihuman.

Mido of the fang tribe, the werewolves, had fangs and his whole body covered in fur. He glared at me when he saw me. It seemed like he was always ready to go to war regardless of the friendly meeting at hand. Just as Nikea had mentioned beforehand, he was not one to hide his dislike for the goblins.

Tanita of the long-tailed tribe, the rizalat, was just like a lizardman with two heads and two tails. He had an exoskeleton over his upper body just like a crustacean, while on his lower body were those things that belonged to amphibians. He didn't seem to like us much either.

Luther of the shell-tribe, the papirsag, was small and carried a grassy shell on his back. We met a few days ago, and while he wasn't openly hostile, he had a tendency to avoid us.

Daizos of the man-horse tribe, the centaurs, was from the same tribe as Gurfia, who dreamed of unifying the demihumans; theirs was a tribe of power and wisdom. Like Mido, Daizos seemed to be an adherent of strength. He was not friendly.

The last one to arrive was Kerodotos of the man-bull tribe, the minotaurs. His appearance resembled more a wild buffalo than a farm cow, and he had two giant horns that reached for the skies, both of which were twice as big as mine. His condescending gaze suggested he had much experience as a warrior, though the way he spoke seemed to betray that.

"Hey, hey! Why is there a goblin here?" He said slowly as he began to swing the giant axe on his back at me.

Nikea quickly stepped in to stop him. If not for her, he would have probably actually swung that axe of his. He talks slow, but he seems to actually be short-tempered.

With that, all the members of the eight flag meeting have been gathered.

“I thank everyone for gathering here today,” Nikea said. “As the person responsible for calling this meeting, I shall act as its moderator. If there is anyone in—”

Nikea was still in the middle of her speech when the werewolf, Mido, spoke out.

“Why is there a filthy goblin here!?” He said as he glared at me.

“Are you insane? Bringing a filthy goblin to our proud meeting,” the centaur, Daizos, said

Luther of the shell tribe didn’t say anything out loud, but he was nodding nevertheless, while Tanita of the rizalat seemed to be quietly thinking. Yushika, on the other hand, seemed amused. As for Kerodotos and Fanfan, their thoughts were a mystery.

Everyone seemed to be against Nikea, but it was best to keep quiet for now. Stepping in now would just make things worse.

“I called this meeting to discuss two main topics. One, the matter regarding our Rekyuble republic, and two, the threat coming from the east. This person here is the king that rules over the goblins of the east. He is our benefactor who has come to inform us of the threat. To treat him poorly would stain our pride,” Nikea said.

Almost everyone looked at me with dubious gazes except for Fanfan, who looked surprised, and Yushika, who seemed amused.

“Threat? What threat? You think these dumb goblins are actually credible?” Mido said.

“I agree with Lord Mido. Why would you trust a goblin!?” Daizos said.

I frowned, but Yushika’s words made everyone quiet.

“Unfortunately, he speaks the truth. Lord Nikea thought you would doubt information from a goblin, so she had me send people to check in advance. I can vouch for the

goblin. He speaks the truth; the forest to the east has indeed been invaded,” Yushika said.

“And you are supposed to be... credible?” Tanita’s two heads alternately chuckled.

“But even if he is telling the truth!” Daizos was about to say when the minotaur interjected.

“I don’t like humans!” Kerodotos said.

Everyone except Fanfan furrowed their brows at the minotaurs untimely interjection.

Daizos continued. “Even if what the goblin says is true, that’s no reason to work with them!”

Luther of the papirsag smiled. “That may be so, but... we have already failed to build our country. How much time do we have?”

His eyes seemed sleepy, but from their depths could be seen a sharp gaze.

“I didn’t bother scouting the humans, so I don’t know,” Yushika nonchalantly said.

“Useless!” Mido of the werewolves spat.

“Oh?” Yushika’s brows raised. “I think I’m much better off than a certain arrogant mutt who’s only good at yelling.”

“Bitch!” Furious, Mido suddenly stood up.

“This is why I hate dogs!” Yushika said as she flew to my side.

Hey, are you seriously planning on dragging me into this mess?

“This goblin king is a lot more reliable,” Yushika said. “Not to mention, profitable. Especially compared to a certain someone who’s all take and no give.”

“Are you insinuating I’m less than a goblin!?” Mido glared at me.

“Stop it!” Nikea yelled. “Have you forgotten you are in the presence of a guest!?”

Yushika shrugged, while Mido clicked his tongue and sat back down.

“In any case, there’s still another issue at hand,” Luther of the papirsag said. “Gurfia’s ghost lurks yet. Unless we deal with that, our republic will remain a but a dream.”

Daizos frowned when he pointed that out.

“Oh, you won’t have to worry about that anymore,” Nikea said.

“What do you mean? That thing is dangerous. You can’t just—” Luther said when Nikea cut him off.

“The goblin king here has already subjugated it,” Nikea curtly said.

“What!?” Suddenly, everyone in the room turned their gazes to me. I stood tall and proud.

“He subjugated it alone. I can vouch for him,” Nikea said.

“It’s the power of love... The power of...” Fanfan said, but her voice was drowned out by everyone else.

“That’s impossible! We couldn’t kill it even with our elites! And yet you’re saying a single goblin subjugated it!?” Daizos said.

“It’s the truth. Or could it be, Lord Daizos, descendant of the noble crystal, that you doubt my word? That would be an insult to us, descendants of the red crystals,” Nikea glared back.

Daizos bitterly frowned.

“If true, that’s one problem out of the way,” Tanita said, half-believing, as he looked at me with his two heads.

“Along with informing us of the threat, the goblin king has also come to us with a proposal,” Nikea said.

All eyes turned to me. Having a naturally scary face is convenient at times like this.

"A proposal to form an alliance to fight off the humans," Nikea said.

Suddenly, the chiefs went into an uproar. Though they might have expected it, they probably couldn't stay put with how proud they are.

"I would like to hear everyone's opinion," Nikea said.

The chiefs looked at each other.

"...There are several things I would like to ask first," Luther of the Papirsag looked at me. "If we reject your proposal, what will happen?"

I answered him. "We will be your enemy. It is better to cut off any possible source of problems sooner than later."

Everyone glared at me, but it was best to lay things clearly. The demihumans have a right to make a decision, after all. They have the right to decide their path.

Whether they will follow me or go against me.

Whether they will fight with me or not.

Those are the two choices I have presented them. If they make a mistake, they will die. That's all. It's not much different than your usual hunt. Of course, being representatives of their various tribes, their decision will affect the rest of their people.

"I would like an answer," I said.

Everyone turned to me in surprise after hearing my blunt response, even Nikea.

Nikea quickly answered, "We, the descendants of the red crystal, accept that proposal."

It seems Rukenon has reported to her about our time together. The reason she responded so quickly is surely because she wishes to better her standing.

"Goblin King, must the cooperation in the stand against humans be purely military? Would it be possible to work together in other ways?" Yushika asked.

“Your support doesn’t have to be solely military. If you have other ways to support, I will gladly accept it,” I replied.

“In that case, the harpies shall accept your proposal,” Yushika said.

“Me too,” Fanfan said.

Starting off with a shocking proposal, then following up with some slightly agreeable conditions to make the agreement sound better.

What I presented before the chiefs were two paths, both of which led to war. The only question was which one they would fight, the goblins or the humans? The demihumans might hate the humans, but that alone wasn’t enough to convince them to work alongside the goblins.

Their pride was in the way, so it was necessary to find a way around that.

“I would like some time,” Tanita said with his two heads bowed.

“I would also like to ask for some time,” Luther of the papirsag said.

Seeing them make a difficult face as they went quiet, I laid down another one of my cards.

“How long?” I asked. “The humans won’t wait forever. If you’re going to cooperate, the sooner the better.”

“I need to convince my tribe,” Luther argued. “At least give me 20 days.”

“That won’t do,” I said.

“But!”

I shook my head. “You people are chieftains, leaders of your tribes, their representatives! You carry your tribes on your back! Isn’t it only fitting that you answer with your own minds?”

I continued. “Three days. Give me your answer by then.”

Everyone was quiet.

Suddenly, Kedorotos of the minotoaurs spoke.

“Oh! What a difficult topic! So hard, so hard! If everyone’s ok, why not just agree?” He said as he scratched his head.

“...I thank you for stopping Gurfia,” Daizos of the centaurs said. “But... we cannot possibly ally ourselves with you goblins! Right, Lord Mido?”

“...I have fought with Gurfia once,” Mido said.

Unlike Daizos who was heating up, Mido spoke calmly as he looked at me. The killing intent he had awhile ago was gone.

“Lord Mido?” Daizos said.

“Lord Daizos,” he said. “We werewolves of the fang tribe respect the strong. If this goblin has truly defeated Gurfia... I am thinking of accepting his proposal.”

“Then... The werewolves will accept?” Nikea asked.

“Under one condition.”

“A condition?”

“We of the fang tribe are friends with the wolves. Their eyes are able to discern the truth, and sometimes, they are even able to tell the location of our prey better than us. Goblin... If you truly are the king of the east and someone worthy of forming an alliance with, then they will see you as friends.”

Mido and Daizos stood.

“Three days later, come to the forest to the north, King of Goblins.”

Like that, Mido of the werewolves left with the bitter Daizos.

INTERMISSION

CYNTHIA'S ADVENTURES I

Status	
Name	Cynthia
Race	Gray Wolf
Level	45
Class	Pup
Possessed Skills	Gale Strike; Charge
Divine Protection	None
Attributes	None

Uuu...

Uuu.

“GURUuu...”

I can't believe I performed so horribly in front of dad...

He patted me on the head as if nothing was wrong, and I ended up wagging my tail as a result, but... I was shocked. Who could've thought that crab would pull off such an underhanded trick at the end?

Uuu.

I can't call Gastra stupid anymore.

Even though I'm supposed to be the older sister who should protect him!

Sigh... What to do? Dad's not around because of the meeting.

Hmm?

Is that a friend I smell?

Well, dad is busy, so I'm sure it'll be fine if I go out and play.

Wow, they're running really fast on two legs.

Oh! They might know of a way to run on two legs!

If I can learn how to run on two legs, I'll be a lot more like dad!

Kicking off against the branches and passing through the grass, I chased after the two-legged friends.

Huh? Where did they go?

"...And just when I was wondering who was following us."

Suddenly, I was taken by the neck.

Hey, stop it!

"GURUuu."

"Oh, sorry. This isn't how a lady should be treated."

L-Lady!?

"Woof!?"

Gently, I was brought back to the ground.

Whew, as I thought, I just can't be at ease unless my feet are firmly rooted on the ground.

"That's right. You might be small, but you're a wonderful lady."

Oh! So I'm a lady!

"Let me introduce myself, friend. I am Mido. Mido of the werewolves, also known as

the tyrant.”

Mido, huh.

He put me back down gently, and he doesn’t seem to be a bad person. I guess I should at least remember his name.

“Woof!”

Cynthia!

“I see, so your name is Cynthia. What an odd name. Was it an elder who named you?”

Hmm? Elder? What’s that? Is he talking about that wrinkled green guy?

“Woof!”

My dad named me! My name means ‘Lady of the Lake Shore’!

“Oh, so you’re dad named you. He seems well-learned. I would like to meet him, but...”

Hmm? Oh, right!

“Woof!”

Teach me how to run on two legs!

“A way to run on two legs? My, you ask some hard requests, Lady Cynthia. But why ever would you want to run on two legs? Isn’t it faster to run on four?”

Unconsciously, my ears and tail drooped. I wonder if he’ll laugh if I say I want to be more like dad.

“Woof...”

It’s a secret.

“A secret, huh. You know, while I might look like this, I’m a man who keeps his word. Won’t you tell me that secret? If I know the reason, I might be able to teach you better

than if I didn't."

Oh, so that's why he wants to know. But what to do...

"Woof?"

Don't tell anyone, alright? Promise?

"Of course, I swear it on my honor. I would never do something to embarrass a friend."

Then I guess I can tell him.

"Woof!"

It's because dad also runs on two legs! I want to become more like dad!

"..."

Huh? Why is he so quiet all of the sudden? And why is he making a difficult face? I know he promised not to tell anyone, but surely that doesn't mean he won't talk anymore, right? I mean how is he supposed to teach me if he doesn't talk?

"Friend... won't you come with me for a bit?"

I wonder if dad won't mind me being gone for a while. The sun's almost set too.

But I also need to learn how to run on two legs...

"Friend, if my guts are right, this might be your last chance to secure your happiness."

What!? So this is my last chance?

"Woof!"

Let's go then!

"Ok then, hop on my shoulder."

I jumped on Mido's shoulders just like I did with dad.

“Don’t fall now.”

Of course.

“woof!”



Fast! Mido said running on four legs is faster, but if it’s possible to run this fast on two legs, wouldn’t it be fine?

“We’re almost there, young lady.”

“Woof!”

Right!

The passing wind feels nice. My tail is happily wagging.

We sure came far though. He better send me back home too. I can go home on my own, but it’ll take me a while by myself.

I hope dad doesn’t get mad. If he does, I’ll just have to blame everything on Mido. Right, let’s do that.

“WOooOF!”

Howls suddenly resounded from everywhere.

“We’re here.”

Hmm? We’ve arrived? I don’t think there’s anything here though.

“Mido of the werewolves has come to meet with the friends!”

Mido yelled right by my ears, so my head went dizzy. I almost fell off, but I managed to use my claws to keep myself from falling.

I complained, but Mido kept looking ahead.

Oh? You're ignoring a lady? That's pretty gutsy of you! I'll show you!

I bit him, but then the thickets swayed. When I looked ahead, there were big friends up ahead.

That was my first time seeing them.

"GURUuu."

I jumped off Mido's shoulders.

I slowly walked, taking big strides forward while I looked up.

A friend looked down at me.

"Whose daughter are you?"

The words resounded within my head. It seems those words came from this guy in front of me.

Hmm... What do I say to this?

"GURUuu."

I'm dad's daughter!

"Fierce fang, do you know of this friend?" Mido asked.

The gray wolf shook his head.

"That would make this one a stray then. I found her in the south, not far from the araneae village."

What is the name of your father? Your mother? What is your name?"

Arrogant bastard!

“GURUuu.”

Dad is dad! My mom is Reshia! I’m Cynthia!

Tell him! I tried to tell Mido, but when I turned, I saw him crying.

Huh? What’s going on? I made Mido cry?

That is not our name.

“So this child really is...”

Someone picked her up and raised her like a pet.

The gray wolf in front of me bared his fangs.

Huh? W-Wait a moment, isn’t this a bit scary!?

“There is no one from around here who would dare to do such a thing. Doing so is the same as a declaration of war, after all,” Mido said as he wiped his tears.

Huh? Is this wolf mad because Mido is crying?

Is it my fault? Huh?

“But there is someone who came here recently! Those goblins!”

Mido’s fangs are getting bigger. Huh? Even his body is getting bigger!? Why!?

Then the answer is clear

“...Unforgivable!! Unforgivable, those beasts!!”

That’s a scary pressure, Mido. My ears are ringing, and my tail is shivering.

“I’m gonna kill every single one of those gobs! They will pay for the sin of trampling on our friends!!”

Hmm? Goblin? Is he talking about dad?

“Woof!”

Stop, Mido! I love dad! My dad is strong! So don't do anything!

“Don't worry, little lady. I am also strong... I am the strongest of our tribe. I am the tyrant, Mido! Just wait here, ok?”

Don't turn your back on me! Hey, Mido!

Huh? Where did he go?

Calm down, friend.

The gray wolf spoke again. Yeah, that's right, stop him!

“You think I can calm down!? I'm going to bloody those goblins this instant!”

I'm saying we will also come with you

Mido stopped for a moment, but in the next moment, he burst out.

“Woooooof! I am glan, friend. Right, the enemy of a friend, is the enemy of all. I told him to come here in three days. Let's kill everyone.”

Huh!?

He's not an enemy!

“Fierce fang, I know I'm being selfish, but can you take care of this lady here? Can I leave it to you to teach her how to live as she should?”

Rest assured, I shall do as my friend asks

“Thank you, friend! See ya, little lady. I shall wipe away all the shame you've gone through!”

Everything happened so fast, by the time I came to, Mido was already gone.

W-Wait Mido!

Shall we go then, little fang? We have to say hello to your elders.

I'm going home!

Trying to resist, eh? What a cheeky brat.

The gray wolf carried me by the neck with his mouth.

Resistance was futile.

INTERMISSION

CYNTHIA'S ADVENTURES II

The gray wolf dragged me into the gray wolf den.

It was my first time seeing so many gray wolves in one place, but...

I really have to go home to dad.

Elder, this girl is...

The gray wolf that brought me sounded somber. Just hearing his voice made my tail stand up.

No need, the girl can speak for herself. Young one, where did you come from?

The oldest of the gray wolves spoke.

Ugh... One of his eyes was crushed. Looks painful.

"GURUu."

From the direction where the sun rises.

What kind of person is your father?

He looked fondly at me as he spoke.

Why isn't he as scary as the others?

Is it because his voice is warm?

My tail was wagging by itself.

"GURURUu."

He's strong and kind.

He didn't hurt you?

Nope. He's strict, but he always protects me.

Elder!

The gray wolf with a somber voice seemed irritated.

Oho? Ferocious fang, it seems you've gotten less patient over the years.

My apologies.

The gramps they called elder started sniffing me.

It's kinda ticklish.

The tribe of the wise ones shall take care of this child. Tell that to the fang tribe.

The surrounding gray wolves all bowed their head.

Gramps is pretty awesome, huh.

Young fang, sleep here tonight. On my name, ancient fang, I swear no harm will come upon you.

"GURUuuu."

Thanks but I really have to go back to dad.

The surrounding gray wolves seemed irritated when I said that.

Hmm... That's a bit troubling. Unfortunately, there is too much danger lurking in the forest. If something were to happen to you, wouldn't your father be sad?

"GURUu..."

I suppose... I mean he was really sad when Mommy Reshia left. Even until now he

would sometimes look out into the distance. Gastra was taken too...

In that case, be a good girl and rest here tonight. I'll be sure to contact your dad.

"GURU?"

Really?

This gramps wouldn't lie to you

Alright, then I guess I'll spend the night here.

*Hear me, my people! Tonight! We shall celebrate the arrival of a new blood from the east!
We shall feast!*

Gramps howled as he said those words.

My tail wagged as his loud voiced resounded.



Gramps said he wanted to hear my story, so we sprawled ourselves over the grass in a sunny place.

The soft grass sure feels nice.

Your dad seems strong.

That's right. Be it deer or giant spiders, dad can take on anything!

I ended up telling him about my wish to run on two legs. Even though it was supposed to be a secret with Mido... But then again, gramps might know something, so...

Say, Cynthia...

Gramps' lone eye looked both gentle and sad.

"GURUu?"

What?

You're a smart kid, so I'm sure you've noticed it already. You and your dad are different, so running on two legs is—

“GURUuuu!!”

—No! I am my dad's daughter!

I won't listen. I won't hear it.

I might be four-legged now, but one day, I'll definitely stand on two legs!

I am dad's daughter! I am my mom's daughter!

Cynthia

“GURUuGAUuuu.”

Why would you say something like that, gramps!?

The other wolves including Mido might all make puzzled faces whenever I talk about dad, but you're wrong, gramps! Or is that what you really think!?

Cynthia that's not what I mean

“GURUuuU.”

Stop it!

My dad is my dad! Stop trying to take him away! If you think he's not my dad just because I walk on four legs, then I'll walk on two legs! I don't need anyone to teach me how!

I love my dad!

I don't want to be anyone else's daughter!

So stop it!

My emotions were a mess as I mouthed off like that. Even my tail was shaking.

Cynthia!

Gramps called out, but I ran away.

I didn't want to hear his excuses.



I ran and ran until I couldn't anymore and stopped under a giant tree.

“GURUu—”

They're wrong. All of them. One day, I'll be able to stand on two legs just like mom and dad.

I'm just a bit slow, that's all.

Leaning onto the tree with my front legs, I helped myself up.

See? even I can do it.

If I just keep training like this, I'm sure I'll be able to walk on two legs eventually.

One, two... When I got to the third step, my front legs fell back to the ground.

Again.

One, two... And then my front legs fell.

Again.

One, two... And then my front legs fell.

Again.

...

After countless failures, I fell to my back, my back legs completely exhausted.

—The truth is...

I know.

I don't look like mom or dad. Gastra and I were clearly different than the others.

And the reason behind that is probably...

My chest began to hurt as I thought to myself, tears welling up from my eyes.

Weird... So, weird...

Sniff...

What are you doing, young fang?

It's that somber sounding wolf. Since when was he standing there?

"GURUu."

I'm practicing to walk on two legs.

The gray wolf sighed before taking a seat beside me.

Let me tell you a story... A story about our chief.

I don't want to hear it.

No, you have a duty to hear it.

The pressure emanating from the wolf's gaze bore down on me.

Our chief was named wise and big fang. He was young, strong, and wise. He was the son of the elder and my cousin, a wolf who carried the hope of a tribe on his shoulders.

The gray wolf's voice was gentle as he seemed to look somewhere distant.

At the time, we were starving. We have food problems even now, but it was different then. Back then, the hunger was so great we had to eat each other just to survive. I don't know what caused the famine, but regardless, because of that someone had to find a new home for the tribe.

Gradually, a hint of sadness filled his voice.

He seems sad.

There was a legend passed down from our ancestors. According to it, there's a paradise to the east. A bountiful land where the wolves had no enemies. Those living on that land all had no fangs, and even if they did, they would only be harmless critters.

The gray wolf smiled.

Someone needed to go scout the land, the one who volunteered was none other than our young chief. Our young, strong, and wise chief. He stood up in our time of trouble and headed to the unknown land with his wife.

The gray wolf turned to me.

But he never came back. Fortunately, the famine ended and we survived. Still, he did not return. Many moons passed, and then... you appeared.

Various emotions filled his eyes. There was hope, and then there was love.

Do you know? Where our chief, the wise and big fang went?

"...GURUu."

I don't. Sorry.

Naturally. After all, if he were alive, do you think he would allow his own child to fall into his enemy's hands!?

The gray wolf growled as he bared his fangs.

I won't forgive your father's killer. He dared kill my cousin, my brother. Even his wife. And

then he even went so far as to raise their children as his pets!

“GURUuu!”

You’re wrong! My dad wouldn’t do such a thing! Dad is kind!

*Wrong! The only reason your dad seems kind is because he’s raising you to be a pet!
Young fang, remember your pride.*

One moment stern, the next moment kind.

When I heard your howl, I knew then that you carried his blood. Our hearts stirred at the sound of your voice. One day you will be able to lead our tribe. Young fang, come with us. With you at the lead, one day, perhaps we will restore our former glory, where we knew no hunger.

“Woof...”

I don’t know. I don’t know...

Think about it. If you come with us, everyone will welcome you.

What’s his problem? Saying whatever he wants... I want to be with dad.

What’s with that wise and big fang?

...

But...

“Woof.”

...It sounds nostalgic... and reassuring.

What should I do?

CHAPTER 115

PARENT AND CHILD

“Are you really going, Your Highness?” Gi Za Zakuend asked.

I nodded.

“Not to speak ill of a fellow descendant of the crystal, but Lord Mido is also infamously known as the Tyrant. He is an agile warrior and is by no means weak. At the very least, you should take some of your subordinates with you,” Nikea said.

Apparently, even she thought I was being reckless.

“My subordinates need to welcome the goblins headed here. Gi Za also has his duties here as the leader of those goblins. Because of that I have to go alone,” I said.

Everyone looked troubled.

If they make that sort of face, I’ll be troubled too.

“The king has spoken, I will obey,” Gi Za said, at which, everyone else conceded.

I prepared for the trip to the north, but... even if I say ‘prepare’ there’s not really much to prepare.

“I’ll be going then,” I said.

Like that I left for the place Mido chose. It was a day’s distance from here and probably their home.



“Did you wait long?” I asked.

“Not at all,” Mido said as he glared at me.

The people behind him seemed to be the bigwigs of their village. Their fangs were bare, and they looked about ready to attack at any time. They were all men, every one of them strong. Their muscles bulged and their eyes shot sharply. They stood just far enough from each other so as to not hinder their movements. Not a single one of them appeared weak.

“Come,” Mido said.

I could feel hate and anger from his glare. Did something happen? Or was this his aim from the start?

But it’s strange. If he intends to kill me, why would he show his hate so openly? If anything he should be hiding his intentions.

When we first met during the meeting, he seemed hostile, but he wasn’t angry or hateful by any means. So why? Why is he so angry now?

Whatever the reason it seems the sword by my waist has become necessary.

How unfortunate. It would have been great if we could take them in as allies.

Gripping my sword once to ascertain it was there by my waist, I followed Mido.

“What a spectacular welcome you’ve prepared,” I said.

If he does intend to fight, then I might as well rile him up as much as I can to get the upper hand.

“Hmph,” Mido said.

“Who would’ve thought the proud werewolves would pick on one goblin. How ridiculous.”

Mido grit his teeth.

Ever since we first met during the meeting, I could tell he’s the impulsive type. Since we’re going to fight anyway, I might as well get as much advantage I can.

I am the king. Defeat is unacceptable.

My defeat would mean the defeat of the entire goblin race.

My lips curved as I thought that.

I guess I was being too naive. I should have asked for an escort after all.

Inwardly, I sneered at having refused Gi Za's and Nikea's advice.

I continued following Mido and egging him on, but he was a lot more patient than expected.

No matter how many times I taunted him, he never attacked.

Was his hate so great that he could keep his emotions in check? But I didn't do anything, did I?

Being attacked without knowing why is really unpleasant.

"We're here, Monster," Mido said.

Before us were flat plains with no trees in sight, an oddity considering we passed by so many trees. I looked around to the thickets in the area, which promptly shook. In the next moment, something came out of the thickets.

—Gray wolf!?

"From your reaction, it seems you have met them," Mido said.

The image of two gray wolves and a death match flashed through my mind. It was a battle that occurred when I was still just a duke.

This are not the same wolves back then.

I shook off the image of those gray wolves in my mind.

—It can't be them!

The thickets shook again, and gray wolf after gray wolf of various sizes came out.

“They are our friends. This’ll be nothing more than an execution, I believe, but I’ll watch over as referee anyway,” Mido said before laughing loudly.

Naive, too naive.

I didn’t even think of the possibility of being betrayed. My trust in the demihumans grew greatly after meeting Nikea, but it seems I was too soft. Different races act differently. These werewolves apparently hate me so much that they are willing to lure me into a trap to kill me. And the reason behind their hate is none other than the gray wolves.

—In that case...

I will accept their challenge.

I swore the day I defeated that gray wolf. If any wishes to challenge me, I shall gladly accept as king.

“GURURUuuuu,” a one-eyed gray wolf left the pack and charged toward me. Two others followed after it. They were all bigger than the rest of the pack. These must be the chiefs of their pack. In that case, I will cut them down and open a path to survival.

The pressure bearing down grew stronger as the gray wolves’ encirclement tightened.

But then...

“WooOOOof!”

A small shadow came out of the encirclement.

It stood between me and the chiefs.

“Cynthia,” I muttered.

I’ve been worrying these past few days since I haven’t seen her in a while, but it seems she’s safe.

But seeing her here isn’t all good.

Can I break through this encirclement with her?

But just as I was thinking of a plan, I noticed the pressure bearing down from the encirclement grow weaker.

“Young master!?” Mido cried.

Young master? Who’s he talking about? Cynthia? What’s going on?

But while I had no idea what was going on, Cynthia stepped forward and growled.

Should I stop her?



What are you doing, young fang?

I thought it through during the night. I thought really, really hard, and... As I thought, I still want to be dad’s daughter!

You spent the night thinking, did you? But regardless, if we don’t avenge our fallen chief now, when will we ever have our vengeance?

The onlookers watched Cynthia and the ferocious fang’s exchange carefully. Cynthia’s voice was so small, but for some reason, it resounded so clearly.

The sound of her voice urged me to bow my head.

I never met the wise and big fang personally, but I’m sure... this must be the power of his blood, the blood of the strongest gray wolf.

What a powerful and yet wise voice.

Then stop us if you can. I can no longer stop myself from avenging our fallen chief!

The ferocious fang stepped onward.

If you touch even a single finger of father’s, I won’t forgive you! I absolutely won’t forgive

you! I am the daughter of the goblin king and Mommy Reshia, I won't lose!

Pathetic! Even though you know full well a goblin can't be your father!

The ferocious fang and Cynthia both used Gale Strike, an attack that turned one's own body into the wind and rammed it into one's foe. The two gray wolves slammed into each other, causing the lighter of the two to fly.

Cynthia was sent high up into the air, but she skillfully manipulated her body, allowing her to land on the ground, then she use Gale Strike again.

It's useless!

Fang took Cynthia's charge head on, and when Cynthia fell back down, he raised up his front legs and swung them down. Being one of the bigger gray wolves of the pack, his attack caused the land to shake. That attack landed beside Cynthia's face.

The difference in strength is clear. Give up. I don't want to hurt you

The ferocious fang's words were filled with parental love, but Cynthia snarled back at him.

No! I'm going to protect Dad!

Cynthia bit at ferocious fang's legs, but he lifted them up and slammed her into the ground.

Cynthia cried each time she was slammed into the ground, but she held on. Gradually, however, the hold of her fangs loosened, and in the end, she let go. Holding on was the most her young body could do. Cynthia no longer showed any signs of moving.

Goblin, because of you I had to stain my paws with the blood of a relative.

Filled with rage, ferocious fang turned his back on Cynthia, but the moment he turned to the goblin king, he felt something on his tail.

Stay away from Dad!

Cynthia should have long realized the gap in their strength, but the moment ferocious

fang let his guard down, Cynthia took him by the tail, lifted him up, and threw him.

Rage filled the ferocious fang.

It seems kindness will do nothing more than spoil you!!

Swift as the wind, the ferocious fang slammed into Cynthia and sunk his strong fangs into her body. Cynthia faltered, but the ferocious fang pursued.

Gradually, wounds started to cover Cynthia's body. The bleeding sapped her of her strength, and being young as she was, she would soon reach her limits.

She tried to run away from the ferocious fangs' bite, but she couldn't dodge everything, and in the end, her front legs were wounded. But still, she jumped back, and with her front legs she suppressed the ferocious fang's fangs.

"Cynthia!" The goblin king cried.

It seems the goblin king has finally reached his limits. He unsheathed the sword by his waist as his eyes kept watch on the two gray wolves fighting.

Don't come! I'm fine!

There's no way the goblin king understood her words, but somehow, he understood what she wanted to say.

The goblin king buried his sword into the ground.

"Mark my words, if something bad happens to Cynthia, I will hunt every single one of you mutts down!!" The goblin king's words resounded so loudly it seemed the heavens and the earth would be devoured.

Mido and the surrounding wolves couldn't help but falter at his words, but the two gray wolves fighting did not even notice him. They were that focused on their battle.

It no longer mattered that his opponent was a pup. The ferocious fang could no longer afford to go easy on her. As they bit each other, Cynthia's attacks gradually became sharper. The great blood of the wise and big fang was surely flowing in her veins. The sight unfolding before our eyes now is the very proof of that.

Suddenly, the figure of my cousin, whose back I once followed, appeared!

I felt heat pass by my cheeks. Cynthia's fangs just passed by me, but they seemed to have grazed me.

To think her fangs were so sharp they could actually tear off the fur of a gray wolf. She's so young and full of wounds, and yet... It feels like if I let my guard down, I could actually lose to her.

It's almost as if the gray wolf fighting in front of me wasn't her but my cousin.

Impossible, impossible!

The ferocious fang used all of his strength and bit at the neck of the illusion.

In the next instant, something hit him at the bottom of his chin, causing him to stagger.

When he turned around, the gallant figure of that great fang overlapped with the small gray wolf.

At that, the ferocious fang put down his fang, and Cynthia walked over to the goblin king, who welcomed her kneeling on one leg.

Just before she reached the king, Cynthia stood up on two legs and walked tottering toward the king.

Dad, you know, I!

When she was about to fall, the king held her up with his hands.

"You don't have to do that, silly. Did you think I would abandon you if you weren't like me?"

The goblin king took her into arms and lovingly caressed her wounds.

The gentle look on his face looked nothing like that of a goblin's but more that of a loving father.

Finally at ease, Cynthia lost the last of her strength and fell asleep. She probably didn't get a wink of sleep last night.

As Cynthia peacefully slept in the arms of the goblin king, a lone gray wolf stepped out from the pack.



A one-eyed wolf stepped out from the pack and growled.

Is this one next? They sure did Cynthia in. I'll have to pay them back for that.

But just as I was about to take out my sword, I heard Mido speak.

"Hey, goblin. The elder wants to talk with you. I'm going to interpret for him, so listen well."

There was no longer any lust in Mido's words. It seems the fang tribe has come to a conclusion with the gray wolves.

"Goblin King, I hear you came from the east. Could you have happened across one of ours?" Mido said, interpreting the gray wolf's growls.

"This happened a long time ago, but I once came across a pair of gray wolves." I said.

"May I know what happened to them?" The gray wolf said through Mido.

"One of them died under my hands, while the other one died after giving birth."

Mido's voice began to shake. Is that because of the gray wolf? Or is that because of his own emotions?

"I see," the gray wolf said through Mido. "I suppose that makes you my son's murderer and my grandchild's benefactor."

Vengeance, huh. Never did I think the gray wolves were capable of such emotions. Here I thought they were just beasts, but it seems they value their comrades a lot.

"...Do you have something, a memento of some sort, that belongs to my son?"

Quietly, I took out the pelt of the gray wolf stuffed into the openings of my armor. It's all torn up because I've been fighting with it for so long, but if there's any proof worth showing, it's this.

The gray wolf sniffed the pelt.

“...Thank you. My son fought well, it seems.”

“AwooooooOOOooo!”

The gray wolf howled sorrowfully, almost as if it was crying its heart out.

The surrounding gray wolves followed suit, and they all howled.

It almost seemed as if they were trying to reach some place up above in the heavens where their brethren lived on.



Cynthia's level has risen.

45 => 1

Status	
Name	Cynthia
Race	Gray Wolf
Level	1
Class	Adult; Successor of the Pack
Possessed Skills	Raging Gale Strike; Charge; Great Blood; Howl of the Beast King; King of the Plains; Ferocious Fangs; Wise Girl
Divine Protection	Goddess of Wisdom
Attributes	None
Abnormal Status	Subservient to the Goblin King

Raging Gale Strike

—You can greatly accelerate if you howl at the same time.

Charge

—Ram your body into the foe and send it flying.

Great Blood

—Growth rate increased.

—Charm effect toward those of the same race.

Howl of the Beast King

—Enemies weaker than you will be suppressed.

—Your strength will be temporarily raised.

King of the Plains

—HP Regen increased while fighting on the plains. (LOW)

—It is possible to lead lower class wolves or other dog-type races.

Wise Girl

—Can be understood better by those of the same race.

—Can be understood slightly better by those of other races.

GOBLIN NAME CHEAT SHEET

[Goblin] Gi Ga

The goblin in that estranged group that was with the protagonist when he defeated an orc. He is currently a noble class, the highest amongst the protagonist's subordinates. He prefers to use the spear.

[Goblin] Gi Gu

The former leader of the village. He was pressured by the protagonist in his goblin noble form, and was added to his subordinates. He uses the long sword, and is relatively smart for a goblin rare. Became a goblin noble in chapter 39.

[Goblin] Gi Gi

Known as a beast warrior, a goblin with the ability to tame beasts. He evolved while hunting spear deer with the protagonist. He prefers to use the axe. His goblin class is rare.

[Goblin] Gi Go

A goblin with many wounds on his body. The food of his horde was stolen by the gray wolves, so he made a decision to follow the protagonist. He is the most experienced amongst the goblin rares. His weapon is a curved katana. He acts like a samurai.

Recently became a noble, and received the divine protection of the Sword God, Ra Baruza.

[Goblin] Gi Za

The druid goblin rare that recently joined them.

[Goblin] Gi Ji

A goblin rare. He evolved in chapter 37 after hunting with Gi Ga. He has the <> skill which makes him great for scouting.

[Goblin] Gi Do

Druid. Uses wind magic.

[Goblin] Gi Jii

Goblin Rare. From Gi Gu's Faction. He is known for his <> which allows him to see his

opponent's weakness.

[Goblin] Gi Da

Goblin Rare. From Gi Ga's faction. Notable skills are <> and <>.

[Goblin] Gi Zu.

Goblin Rare. The goblin favored by the Mad God (Zu Oru). Has the <> skill.

[Goblin] Gi Zo

Druid. Water magician.

[Goblin] Gi De

Beast tamer.

[Goblin] Aluhaliha

Leader of Paradua, one of the four goblin tribes and are known for their use of rider-beasts, which are essentially giant tigers.

[Goblin] Rashka

Leader of Gaidga, one of the four goblin tribes and are known for their valor and brutish strength.

[Goblin] Gilmi

Receiver of the title, The First Archer. He is the second in command in Ganra, one of the four tribes known for their rare ability amongst goblins to use bows.

[Goblin] Narsa

The Princess of Ganra. She is the only female goblin rare introduced so far.

Other Characters

Humans

Reshia Fel Zeal (17 years-old)

The priestess known as the saint. As the Healing Goddess' follower, she lives to spread the word and teach righteousness. She has the divine protection of the goddess, and can heal others.

Lili (21 years-old)

She studied the famous sword style, Zweil Style, in the capital. She has sworn fealty to Reshia. And while she may have lost to the protagonist in one hit, she has proven herself strong enough to easily defeat three normal goblins.

Mattis (26 years-old)

The second son of a farmer. He's largely responsible for drying the meat to preserve them.

Chinos (24 years-old)

The third son of a farmer. He plows the fields and is close to Mattis.

Keifel (28 years-old)

An adventurer who took on a request to escort Reshia through the Forest of Darkness. He's strong enough that he could easily wield a steel great sword, but the protagonist still managed to kill him.

Zeon (32 years-old)

A follower of Ativ. He specializes in fire magic. In his battle against the protagonist, he used his fire magic, but still lost. In the end, he tried to blow himself up along with the protagonist, but the protagonist's words agitated him, causing him to lose the opportunity.

Tinra (23 years-old)

A villager. She is one of the women used by the goblins as a breeding machine that the protagonist killed.

Ashtal Do Germion (59 years-old)

The king that rules the western region of the continent in which the Forest of Darkness and the connecting borders are included. He is a powerful ruler with seven holy knights under him. He has recently ordered three of those holy knights to search for the saint.

Gowen Ranid (45 years-old)

The feudal lord that rules over the region next to the Forest of Darkness. As one of the country's strongest powers, he is renowned as the Iron-Armed Knight. He is currently leading his soldiers in a quest to find the saint.

Gulland Rifenin (31 years-old)

A former adventurer. As one of the country's strongest powers, he is renowned as the Storm Knight. He'd been stationed in the northern mountains, but the king called him back to send him off in a quest for the saint.

Gene Marlon (24 years-old)

As one of the country's strongest powers, he is renowned as Lightning-Fast Knight. He was previously stationed at the south, but the king called him back to send him on a quest to search for the saint. Killing is his favorite past-time. Whether it's a man, a demihuman or a monster, they're all just pieces of meat to be cut down before him.

Herculean Wyatt (40 years-old)

A member of the Blood Oath of the Flying Swallow. He specializes in handling great shields. He has a gentle personality, but beware for his anger isn't one to be taken lightly.

Mage Killer Mill (19 years-old)

A member of the Blood Oath of the Flying Swallow. She is an assassin that favors the use of talons. Renowned as the mage killer, she is a mage's worst nightmare.

Wand of Destruction Bellan (37 years-old)

A member of the Blood Oath of the Flying Swallow. He wields a fire staff. As a former knight, he cares a great deal about honor.

Hawk-Eyed Fick (31 years-old)

An adventurer with two names. He has exceptional perception and skill. He is currently searching through the Forest of Darkness under Gulland's lead.

The White Hand of Life (Previously translated as divine hands) (Age Unknown)

A priest robed in white. She specializes in healing and support. Her age, name, and origin are all unknown.

Vitz (25 years-old)

A talkative sword-wielding adventurer. He's actual strength isn't bad, but he's still far from being deserving of a second name.

Yugil (26 years-old)

An adventurer and an unwilling shield bearer. He might appear old, but he is actually still young.

Yoshu (26 years-old)

The younger brother of the slaves Gene purchased. The collar of obedience around his neck keeps him from going against Gene's orders. Healers are rare, so he's been made into a shield bearer.

Shumea (28 years-old)

The older sister of the slaves Gene purchased. The collar of obedience around her neck keeps her from going against Gene's orders. Contrast to her brother who bears a shield, she uses a spear.

Household of the Gods

Altesia.

The Goddess of the Underworld and the Goddess of Valor. As the goddess the snakes serve, she has given her blessing to the protagonist. She is a dangerous woman with her deep jealousy and fierce temperament.

Zenobia

The Goddess of Healing. She has given her blessing to Reshia. She has also warned the protagonist to protect her. Altesia might hate her, but she doesn't feel the same way toward Altesia.

Pitch Black (Verid)

A one-eyed red-eyed snake that belongs to the Goddess of the Underworld.

Twin-Headed Snake

Known to the goblins as the Lord of Decay. He is one of the snakes that fought the world with the Goddess of the Underworld.

Others

Selena

The elven woman Gene purchased. She became a slave after running away from her tribe.

Hasu

A high kobold. She is one of the protagonist's pets.

The protagonist managed to tame her by giving her orc corps and other meat as bait. She is a fortuitous kobold who somehow managed to become the leader of her pack.

Cynthia

As the pup of the gray wolves, she has been given the elven name that means lady of the lake. Reshia, Lili, and other children and women are quite taken by her lovely fur.

Gastra

As the pup of the gray wolves, he has been given the name of a wise human monarch that means sovereign of the wind's howls. His uninhibited personality leads him to battle Hasu for ranks on a daily basis.

Bui

A timid orc. Gol Gol had taken a liking for him despite his small body. After Gol Gol died, he led the orcs to the west, but the protagonist managed to capture them.

Gol Gol

The orc king that attacked the village. He is a berserker who can use skills. He was defeated by the protagonist.



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